

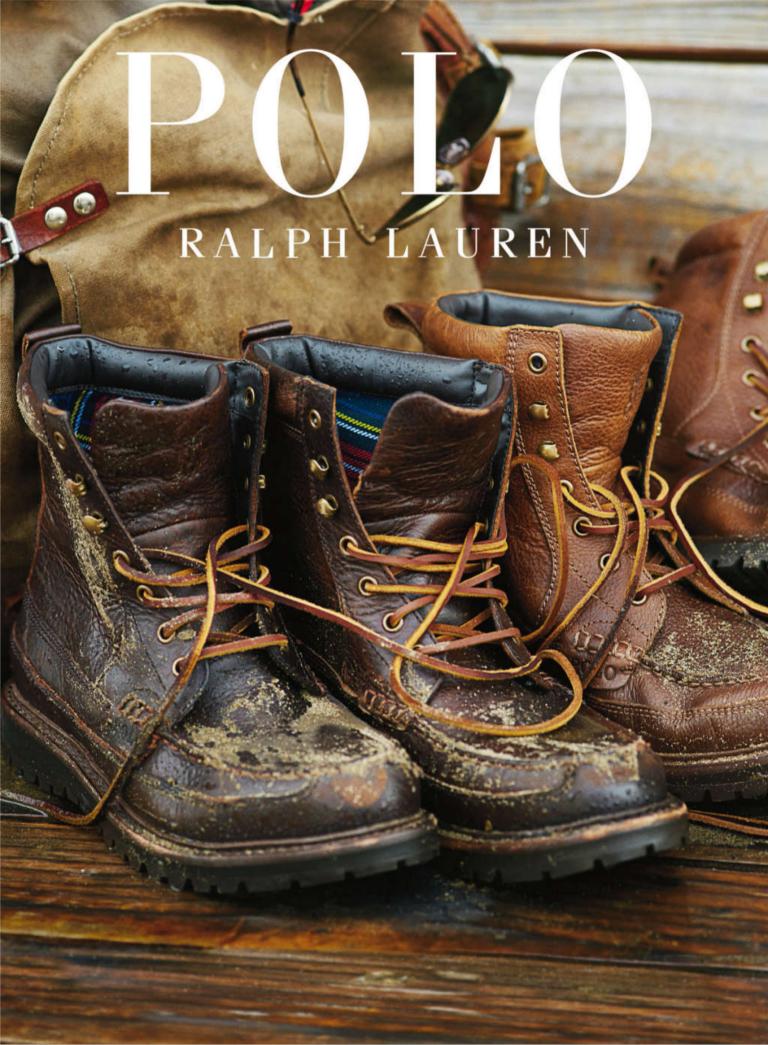


LOUIS VUITTON





LOUIS VUITTON







Movado Edge designed in collaboration with Yves Béhar Saks Fifth Avenue, select locations /ISS.MOVADO. ENSION.ICONIC. CURVE.MUSEUM. GRAPHIC.MODERN. THENTIC.ART. I.STYLE. ON.ENHANCED. GIZED. GE.SMOOTH. ECTED.MUSEUM. EENERGIZED. ED.AUTHENTIC. **IED.SWISS.** N.MODERN.FORM. PASSION.TACTILE. ZED.INDUSTRIAL.













SPECTRE

0075

IN CINEMAS



JAMES BOND'S CHOICE



Exclusively at OMEGA Flagship Boutiques and selected retailers worldwide







HOLIDAY 2015 Shearling Bomber Jacket on Janis Rucksack in saddle

coach.com





DRESS FOR YOUR TRAJECTORY.

THIS IS KIT AND ACE



THE GENTLEMEN'S FUND



GQ thanks 2015 host

NICK CANNON

for his work with

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN

You know Nick Cannon; the only question is which one? You may know the actor, the entrepreneur, the comic, the television producer, or the improv master. If you've caught even a glimpse of pop culture in the last fifteen years, you know the man is entertaining. But that's not the only reason he's the perfect choice to host this year's Gentlemen's Fund awards ceremony.

Meet Nick Cannon, the advocate. As a board member of St. Mary's Hospital for Children, Nick is helping to stick up for those who need it most.

St. Mary's Hospital for Children is the first hospital in the country focused on long-term care for special needs children. The organization's reach extends beyond the walls of the hospital itself, providing medical services to over 2,000 children in their homes. Nick has worked tirelessly on behalf of the kids of St. Mary's, raising money and awareness on behalf of those who can't speak out for themselves.

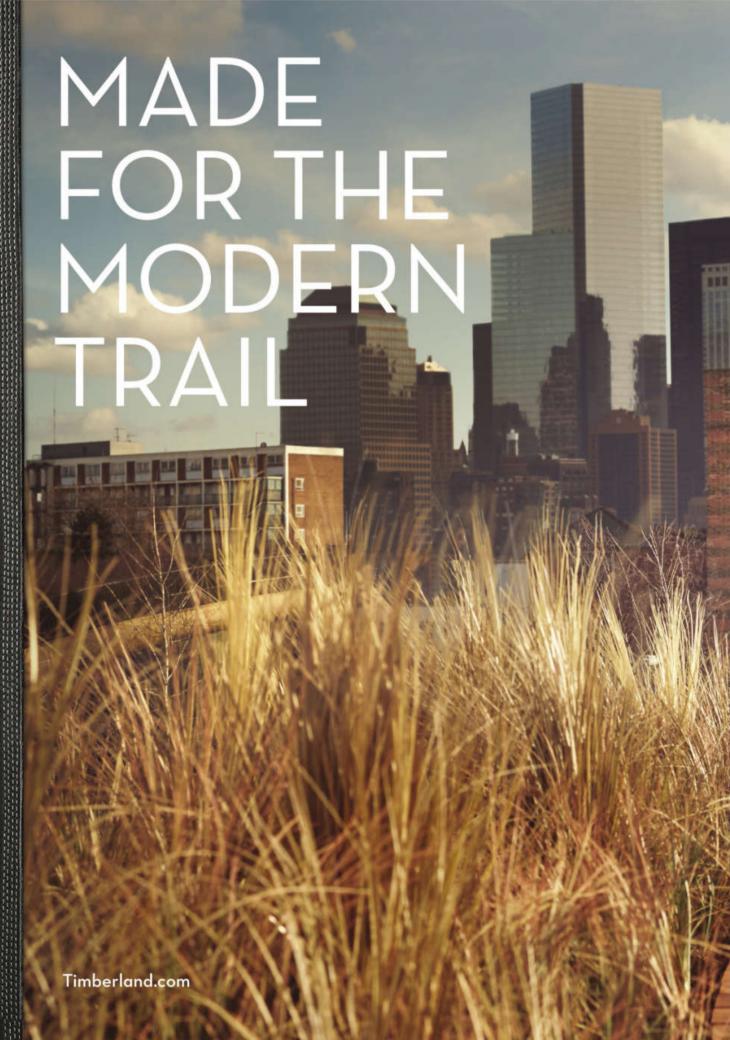
At this year's event, Nick steps on stage as both the man of many talents and the man of good will the entertainer and the advocate.

Get involved at STMARYSKIDS.ORG









orland and 👄 are trademanks of TBL Licensing LLC. e 2015 TBL Licensing LLC. All rights reserve



OVE

Departments

32 Letter from the Editor 40 GQHQ

49 Manual 54

176

Amber Rose leaves little to our imagination

GQ Intelligence

The Punch List
Our cheat sheet to everything you need to see, hear, and read this month, from Aziz Ansari's LOLZ Netflix sitcom to our favorite capital-C characters in the NBA

Fashion's BFF
Balmain designer Olivier Rousteing's plan for world domination at the expense of fashion's fusty establishment: lots of selfies, some Kardashians—oh, and some badass clothes, too BY JESSICA PRESSLER

ZACH BARON bravely—and happily—dives into the wedding-industrial complex to plan his very special day

The Guy Who Could Beat Hillary (Isn't Running for President) Representative Trey Gowdy—the congressional

investigator at the center of Clinton's e-mail fiascomight be the most influential man in the presidential race BY JASON ZENGERLE

GQ's guide to the great desert vacation

Go west. young men the word "glamping." 22 GQ.COM NOVEMBER 2015







Jaden Smith is nearly brought to his knees by these threads.

Hoodie, \$895, by Alexander Wang. T-shirt by MSFTSrep. Pants, \$1,170, by Louis Vuitton. Sneakers, \$110, by Vans. Necklace by Love Adorned. Cap by Dsquared2.

Fashion

140 Chalk Up a Win It's pinstripe's fuzzier,

funkier brother. As British actor Tom Hiddleston shows, the chalk stripe is the suit you want this fall

PAGE 2/3

146 How to Find the Right Watch for You

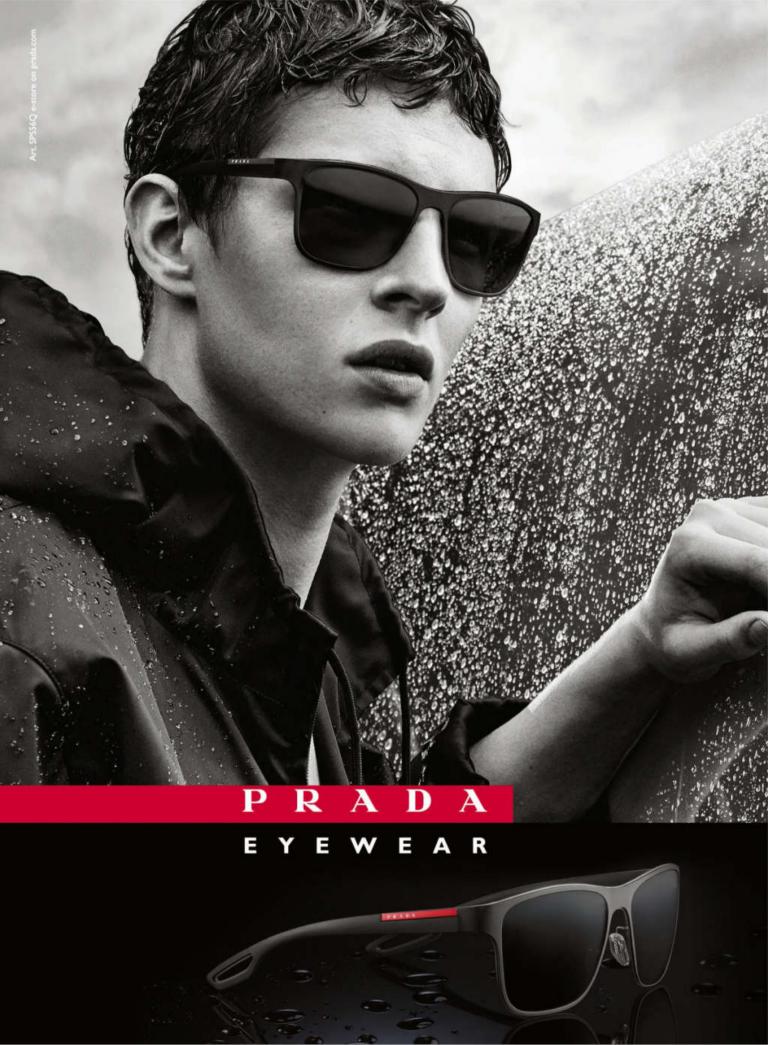
There are too many watches, in too many styles. Let us help you cut through the hype and find the right one for your wrist

-158

Dress Like Jaden

Our favorite trippy teenthat'd be Jaden Smithshows you how to rock fashion's trippiest fall clothes BY ZACH BARON

Combat Rockers
Punk may be dead, but
its footwear is still kicking.
Your next pair of boots
should be big, black, and able to survive the worst a mosh pit (or a blizzard) has to offer





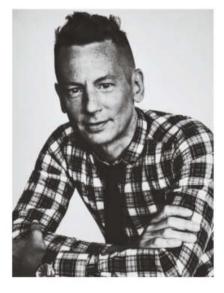
unforgettable







Thank You, I'm Hungry



FOLKS, IT'S ALMOST Thanksgiving, so I apologize for not having a giant succulent turkey breast on the cover, glistening with oven sweat and turkey acne.

We had so many other things we wanted to celebrate and give thanks for in this issue. Including, yes, a bounty of American food, which somehow keeps getting better and better (scarf down "The 50 Best Things to Eat & Drink Right Now" on page 130). In fact, we inadvertently ended up making a different kind of Thanksgiving issue, an all-American celebration of Excellence, Righteousness, and Taylor Swift. And so, my fellow Greatest Nation in the Worlders, we'd like to give thanks and bow down first to Taylor, because like America, she is important and beautiful and responsible for half the GDP of her industry. Then let us give thanks to damn handsome clothes and Aziz Ansari and Jaden Smith and all those Amber waves of Rose.

Are we ready to talk a little more about food? Because I am. Specifically I'm thinking about the food at Roberta's in Brooklyn. The pizzas, yes, the pastas, sure, but did you know they also make the planet's best peanut butter? (Again with The 50 Best Things to Eat!) Sorry I keep bringing up food. Obviously I'm ravenously hungry as I write this. The truth is, I am always hungry. Always dreamscaping my next meal, which in case you're wondering will be that insane burger from Dickson's Farmstand Meats in New York, where they miraculously figured out how to get bacon inside the patty, said burger then grilled in the great outdoors, followed by some threeyear-aged Gouda slapped rudely on its hindquarters. Sriracha mayonnaise on the side, as it is now and ever shall be.

See, it's like that all the time: My pursuit of food drives me to distraction. You might think I'm talking to you when I meet you, but all I'm really doing is thinking about honey-butter potato chips while you move your chompers.

Honey. Butter. Potato. Chips. Can you believe someone had the genius and the culinary decency to combine those ingredients into one body-of-Christ-like wafer? (50 Best!)

Sweet Jesus, I can't help but think in religious metaphors when it comes to food. This goes way back for me. When I was in Catholic high school, my religion teacher, an un-fun priest with the *Omen*-conjuring name of Damian, asked me to stand up and write the four Necessities of Human Life on the chalkboard. Naturally, I thought of The Big Four—food, water, masturbation, and mutual masturbation. I was wrong! Apparently, it's food, water, sex, and spiritual fulfillment. (I couldn't help but ask him the next logical question: "Father, if S-E-X is a necessity of life, how can priests do without it?" He looked

at me as if I were the morbidly obese pornographer Larry Flynt. "*That*, young man," he howled across the desktops, "is the mystery of God!")

I don't know if Father Damian knew it, but rather than asserting the power of prayer and spiritual striving, he was elevating food in my mind to the level of godliness, where I felt certain it belonged. I went home and did what I did every day: seared up a Steak-umm sandwich, my specialty, a savory treat that could only have been improved by the invention of honey-butter potato chips, and thanked the good Lord for pressed meats.

So yeah, I think the pursuit of food is almost holy, every meal quasi-sacred. I don't stop and say grace, because, come on, that would intrude on food time, but I'm eternally grateful for every last drop of wine, every tongue-lash of sriracha. And so by the time Thanksgiving rolls around, I always feel it's patently redundant.

What? I think. People only give thanks once a year? The ingrates.

Anyway, my wish for you is to go wide this year: May you have 365 Fat and Happy Thanksgivings.

JIM NELSON

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



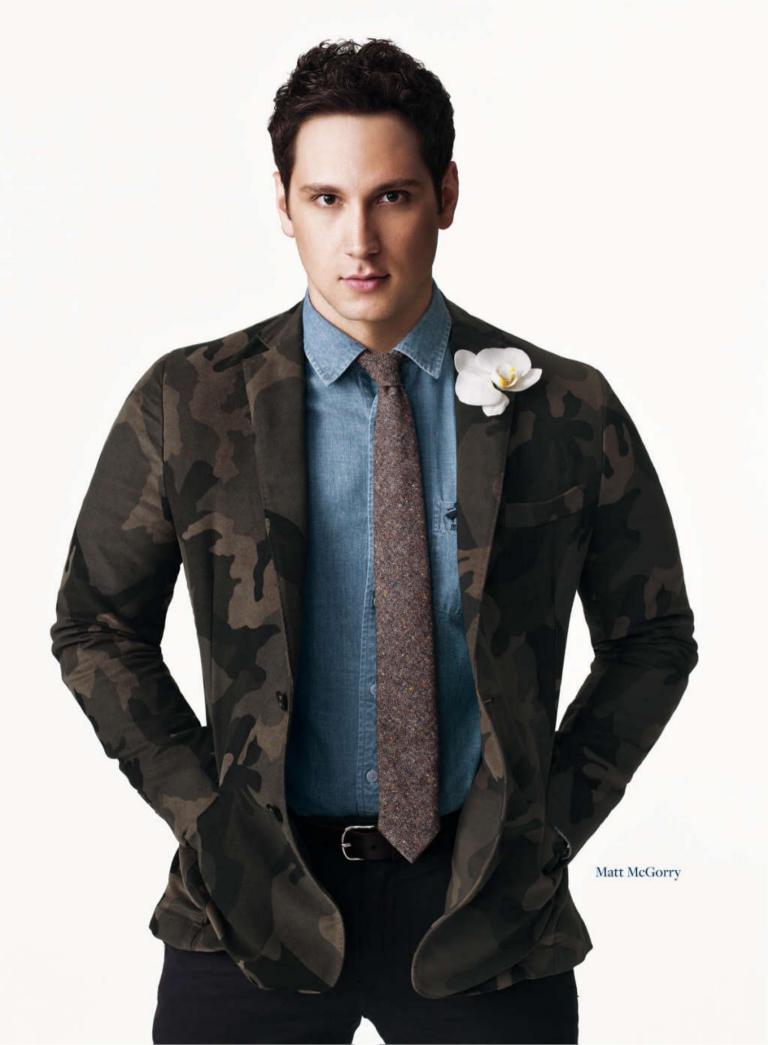
What's your Brooks Brothers story?

"My Magic Blazer...

I don't feel like a magician augmore
when I put on a blazer, but I
definitely feel complete."



Every day is an event. We dress you for the occasion. Share your Brooks Brothers story at brooksbrothers.com/stories





THE GENTLEMEN'S FUND

2015 LEADER AVARDS SPONSORED BY AVAIDA

GQ is pleased to announce the 2015 Leader Award Winners, as selected by The Gentlemen's Fund Advisory Panel. *GQ* and Movado will honor these men at the annual Gentlemen's Ball in New York City on October 22. All winners receive a Movado Museum® Sport Chrono timepiece and a contribution to their charity, provided by Movado.

LEADER AWARD WINNERS



David FlinkFounder & Chief Empowerment Officer
Eye to Eye



Marc B. Goldberg, MD

Vice President

Healing The Children New Jersey



David Morton

Co-founder & Executive Director

The Juniper Fund

To learn more about the winners and lend support to these organizations, please visit

THEGENTLEMENSFUND.COM



MADE IN INDIA





PAULDRISH.COM

A HISTORY OF MODERN.

BULOVA

EST! 1875 4 NEW YORK



262 kHz

UHF Ultra High Frequency

The high-performance quartz inside each Bulova Accutron II UHF timepiece vibrates at a frequency of 262 kHz. This exclusive technology features unparalleled accuracy and a signature sweeping second hand.

BULOVA.COM

→ We've gone from a monthly to an all-thetimely. Here's the latest news from the ever-widening world of GQ

The Internet Just Got a Whole Lot Better

→ Our website is getting a major overhaul this month, spearheaded by the three digital ninjas you see below. This isn't just a face-lift; it's full reconstructive surgery. The team told us about a few areas where you're about to see big changes.



Mike Hofman Executive digital director

"Makina sure that our site forearounds video is reallu important. Whether it's Jim Moore ironing a shirt or 2 Chainz truina out the most expensive bong, these are reallu fun videos that uou can aet lost watching on Saturday afternoons.'



Sarah Ball Executive digital

"It's like our photos went from pixelated Apple II screens to lush NFL-size Jumbotrons. It makes the biggest difference. You can finallu see the finest details of a style shoot or some highres chemistru between R2-D2 and Amy Schumer."



Louise Hart Digital managing

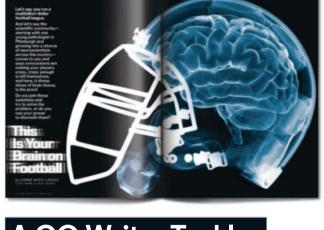
editor "Long-form readers will have a richer, more immersive storutellina experience. We've been experimentina with one-offs over the years, but we want to do it much more as a matter of routine."



GQ's Michael Paterniti earned a spot on the National Book Awards longlist for Love and Other Ways of Dying, an essay collection with many pieces from this mag. Go, Mike!



gq prefers that letters to the editor be sent to letters@gq.com. LETTERS MAY BE EDITED.



A GQ Writer Tackles the NFL's Biggest, **Most Ignored Problem**

→ In our October 2009 issue, GQ's Jeanne Marie Laskas profiled Bennet Omalu, the doctor who discovered evidence of football's long-term effects on the brain. Concussion, her book based on the story, comes out November 24, and a film version starring Will Smith will be out next month. We spoke to Laskas about all the excitement.

GQ: Did you know in 2009 that you wanted to make Omalu's story into a book?

Jeanne Marie Laskas: No. but I do remember learning about it and thinking, God, it's like a Grisham novel. The strangeness and the intrique.

Why are you publishing a book so near to the

film's release? People are going to want to know who Omalu is, now that he's on the screen and Will Smith is playing him, and the movie can only do so much.



What drew you to Omalu's story initially?

The New York Times had done incredible reporting about concussions in the NFL, so we weren't trying to break any news. The piece we brought to the table was really Bennet's story, because he had

44 I'm humbled and exhilarated by the book and movie. The promise I made to Mike Webster, Terru Long. Andre Waters. Justin Strzelczyk, Chris Benoit to vindicate them—is coming through."—Bennet Omalu

been kicked into obscurity. The story dug into the culture in ways that we couldn't have anticipated.

Even the trailer for Concussion caused a stir.

I think people on the movie side even were a little bit surprised about how the trailer went viral right away. People are ready for this one.

What was the mood like on the set of Concussion?

People would say to me. "This is so different from most movie sets we work on." Everybody cares. Everybody feels like they're saving the world, and we know we have to portray this in a way that everybody understands. This is about changing a culture.

CHANEL

BLEU DE CHANEL





MAISON MARGIELA



VIBERG





MR PORTER

Shop GQ SELECTS powered by MR PORTER, the Men's Style Destination at gq.com/selects

> Enter GQSELECTS at checkout for free next-day delivery

#GQSELECTS #MRPORTER



ROCKY MOUNTAIN FEATHERBED



GITMAN VINTAGE



TOM FORD



FABRIC-BRAND & CO



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

.lim Nelson

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Fred Woodward Jim Moore Ken Gawrych MANAGING EDITOR DIRECTOR OF EDITORIAL PROJECTS EXECUTIVE EDITOR Devin Friedman Brendan Vaughan SENIOR ARTICLES EDITOR Devin Gordon Will Welch STYLE EDITOR

DESIGN DIRECTOR

EXECUTIVE DIGITAL DIRECTOR Mike Hofman

ARTICLES EDITORS Geoffrey Gagnon, Jonathan Wilde EXECUTIVE DIGITAL EDITOR

SENIOR EDITOR Daniel Riley

SENIOR EDITORS, ENTERTAINMENT Nojan Aminosharei, Dana Mathews SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR Nick Marino

STAFF WRITER Zach Baron ASSOCIATE EDITORS Mark Anthony Green, Eric Sullivan

ASSISTANT EDITOR Sam Schube Beniv Hansen-Bundv ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS Lauren Larson, Clay Skipper

FASHION DIRECTOR Madeline Weeks FASHION MARKET DIRECTOR Ted Stafford BOOKINGS DIRECTOR Victoria Graham

FASHION EDITORS Lucy Armstrong, Garrett Munce, Jon Tietz

PARIS EDITOR Muriel Mercier CREDIT & LOCATION COORDINATOR Nanette Bruhn ASSISTANT TO THE CREATIVE DIRECTOR John Brian Pierce Madison Blank, Luke Versaw FASHION ASSISTANTS

BOOKINGS ASSISTANT Kerrie Cline

ART & PRODUCTION

DEPUTY ART DIRECTOR Andre Jointe SENIOR DESIGNER John Muñoz DESIGNERS Griffin Funk, Martin Salazar

DIGITAL DESIGNER Jeffrey Kurtz PRODUCTION DIRECTOR Jim Gomez ART PRODUCTION DIRECTOR Jennifer Gonzalez

Timothy J. Meneely PRODUCTION ASSOCIATE DIGITAL PRODUCTION ASSOCIATE Casey Jabbour

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Krista Prestek Justin O'Neill SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR

PHOTO EDITORS Jolanta Alberty, Michael Allin

ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR Monica Siwied ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR Emma Schwartz

DIGITAL

Louise Hart MANAGING EDITOR ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR DIGITAL NEWS EDITOR Ashley Fetters Chris Gayomali

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT EDITORS Freddie Campion, John Lockett ASSOC. DIRECTOR, AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT Kiku Chaudhuri

DATA ANALYST Alex Adriano SENIOR DIGITAL EDITOR John Jannuzzi ASSOCIATE FASHION EDITOR Liza Corsillo DIGITAL CULTURE WRITER Maggie Lange STYLE WRITER Jake Woolf MARKET ASSOCIATE Reginald Christian LEAD PRODUCER Genevieve Walker

> Arlen Konopaki, Spencer Wardwell VIDEO PRODUCTION EDITORS HEAD OF PRODUCT & DESIGN DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING

Doug Seidman Daniel Chang DIGITAL ART DIRECTOR Hugo Broche

> JUNIOR DEVELOPERS Colleen Joyce, Isaac Torres

COPY & RESEARCH

ASSOCIATE MANAGING EDITOR Laura L. Vitale SENIOR COPY EDITOR Ted Klein RESEARCH DIRECTOR Lucas Zaleski Hilary Elkins SENIOR RESEARCHER Rilev Blanton RESEARCHER

CONTRIBUTORS

EDITOR-AT-LARGE Michael Hainey Lauren Bans, Taffy Brodesser-Akner, CORRESPONDENTS

Tom Carson, Andrew Corsello, Robert Draper, Sean Flynn, Chris Heath, Jeanne Marie Laskas, Drew Magary, Brett Martin, Michael Paterniti

Nathaniel Penn, Alan Richman, George Saunders, Wells Tower, Amy Wallace

POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT Jason Zengerle CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Jason Gay, Andy Ward CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Richard Burbridge, Nathaniel Goldberg, Sebastian Kim, Paola Kudacki,

Martin Schoeller, Mark Seliger, Peggy Sirota, Carter Smith, Michael Thompson, Ben Watts

Brian Coats, Michael Nash CONTRIBUTING STYLISTS Carly Holden

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR Amy E. Grippo EDITORIAL BUSINESS MANAGER ASSISTANT BUSINESS MANAGER Tanya Weston

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Anna Wintour

PUBLISHER, CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER

Howard S. Mittman

ASSOCIATE DIBLISHED Stefanie Rann ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER INTEGRATED SALES Edward Romaine DIRECTOR FINANCE & BUSINESS OPERATIONS Rory Stanton

ADVERTISING SALES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INTEGRATED PROGRAMS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RETAIL

Karen Landrud Drechsler

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS ADVERTISING DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL FASHION

Meghan Finnell Bobby Graham

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LUXURY & VIDEO LUXURY GOODS DIRECTOR

Diane Mattioli Tim Begley

Syd Cooper Hersh LOS ANGELES Terry Dwyer MIDWEST Grea Barnes NORTHWEST DETROIT Stephanie Schultz SALES DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL MARKETS Rula Al Amad

SOUTHWEST REPRESENTATIVE

August Media SOUTHEAST REPRESENTATIVE Peter Zuckerman, z-MEDIA EUROPEAN TECH/FINANCE/TRAVEL Simpson Media, David Simpson

MIDDLE FAST Integrated Advertising Sales FZ LLC, Mia Cachero

GENERAL MANAGER, ADVERTISING Susi Park

INTEGRATED BUSINESS DIRECTOR Brita Bergh Dahlback BUSINESS MANAGER Janelle Tena

SENIOR DIGITAL PLANNER Megan Margel DIGITAL SALES PLANNERS Brett Karbach, John Keeley

DIGITAL SALES ASSOCIATES Natalie Sangiacomo, Shauna Teevens

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PUBLISHER Claire Caragol

SALES ASSISTANTS Frin Hickok Veasna Kim

Debra Konstadt, Roberta Libanori, Jennifer Peterson, Hannah Strumwasser,

Caryn Wong, Kendall Zaharris

CREATIVE SERVICES & MARKETING

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INTEGRATED MARKETING Fuaud Yasin SENIOR MARKETING DIRECTOR Pamela Kaupinen EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTOR Patrick Lavergne EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SPECIAL PROJECTS Krista Bovd DESIGN DIRECTOR Gregory Hall INTEGRATED DIRECTOR Taylor Daly ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, INTEGRATED MARKETING Mike Assenza ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR Jamie Stuart SENIOR INTEGRATED MARKETING MANAGER Tyler Stewart SENIOR DESIGNER Efi da Silva

> EXECUTIVE STYLIST Brett Fahlgren MANAGERS, INTEGRATED MARKETING Elisabeth Bundschuh, Anna Hunter,

Nicole Spagnola ASSOCIATE MANAGER, INTEGRATED MARKETING Delisha Fields

Mecal Lindsev JUNIOR DESIGNER INTEGRATED MARKETING COORDINATOR Hannah Hogensen

MARKETING COORDINATOR Reilly O'Connor

PUBLISHED BY CONDÉ NAST

CHAIRMAN S.I. Newhouse, Jr. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Charles H. Townsend Robert A. Sauerberg, Jr. PRESIDENT CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER David E. Geithner Edward J. Menicheschi

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER & PRESIDENT- CONDÉ NAST MEDIA GROUP CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER Jill Bright

> Fred Santarpia EVP-CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER

EVP-CONSUMER MARKETING Monica Ray EVP-HUMAN RESOURCES JoAnn Murray David Orlin SVP-OPERATIONS & STRATEGIC SOURCING

Robert Bennis MANAGING DIRECTOR-REAL ESTATE David B. Chemidlin SVP-CORPORATE CONTROLLER CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER Nick Rockwell SVP-CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS Patricia Röckenwagner SVP-SALES STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS SVP-DIGITAL SALES, CN & CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER. CNÉ

Josh Stinchcomb Lisa Valentino Suzanne Reinhardt SVP-FINANCIAL PLANNING & ANALYSIS SVP-23 STORIES/MARKETING SOLUTIONS Padraig Connolly SVP-AD PRODUCTS & MONETIZATION David Adams

CONDÉ NAST ENTERTAINMENT

PRESIDENT Dawn Ostroff EVP/GENERAL MANAGER-DIGITAL VIDEO Joy Marcus EVP-CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER Sahar Elhahashi Jeremy Steckler EVP-MOTION PICTURES EVP-PROGRAMMING & CONTENT STRATEGY, DIGITAL CHANNELS EVP-ALTERNATIVE TV SVP-MARKETING & PARTNER MANAGEMENT Teal Newland

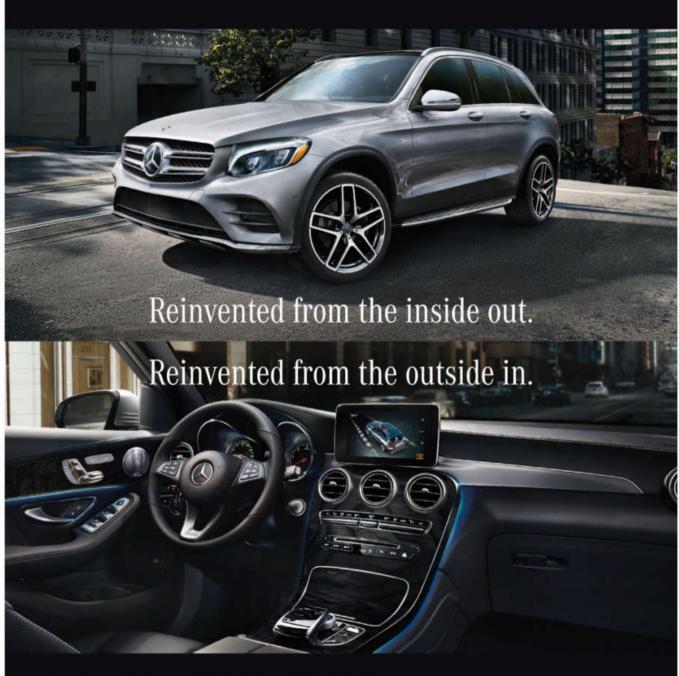
CONDÉ NAST INTERNATIONAL

CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE Jonathan Newhouse PRESIDENT Nicholas Coleridae

Condé Nast is a global media company producing premium content for more than 263 million consumers in 30 markets.

www.condenast.com www.condenastinternational.com

Those submitting manuscripts, photographs, artwork, or other materials to Gentlemen's Quarterly for consideration should not send originals unless specifically requested to do so by Gentlemen's Quarterly in writing. Unsolicited manuscripts, photographs, and other submitted materials must be accompanied by a self-addressed overright-delive return envelope, postage prepaid. However, Gentlemen's Quarterly is not responsible for any unsolicited submissions



Introducing the all-new GLC. Starting at \$38,950." Whatever your vantage point, the GLC is a game-changer. From its showstopping exterior to its technology-filled cabin. From a suite of intelligent assistance systems that think, monitor and adjust as you drive to an infotainment system so smart, it can read your handwriting. "All-new" in every possible sense, the GLC resets the bar for the luxury SUV. MBUSA.com/GLC

Mercedes-Benz

The best or nothing.



Get the GQ Look



LIKE WHAT YOU SEE IN THE PAGES OF GQ? **NOW YOU CAN** GET IT-AND WEAR IT— **RIGHT AWAY**

- → EACH MONTH. the editors of GQ will select a series of items from our pages available through our online retail partner, Mr Porter.com
- →TO LEARN more—and see what we have chosen for you this month—go to GQ.com/selects

Just a few of our picks from this issue...



Want Les Essentiels bag p. 50



Golden Goose Deluxe **Brand** sneakers p. 162



Dolce & Gabbana polo p. 52



Neil Barrett boots (center) p. 165



GGIIII encel



The Coat That'll Make You a Leading Man

GQ Endorses The beauty of shearling—besides the weighty, unbeatable warmth—is that it hints at a life spent doing outdoorsy, Marlboro Man things. But for too long it's been stuck in a lifeless tan-and-brown rut that felt more suburban ranch home than ranch hand. Now come Hedi Slimane, Tom Ford, and Coach to reboot sheepskin jackets, making them in every color and in fresh styles: hooded, cropped, biker, bomber, and beyond. Take a lesson from actor Jason Clarke, star of *Everest*, and pull an updated shearling over whatever you wear this winter. It's the surest way to look like The Man, Marlboro or otherwise.—JIM MOORE

Coach Men's | \$2,200 | coach.com

Incoming!

Blame Canada... for These Amazing Clothes

Shedding its image as a land of hockey jerseys and fur trappers hats, our northern neighbor now has countless shopping meccas stocked with homegrown designers who are (politely) invading our closets

Vancouver > Has Peak Style

The whole slim-sweatpants, luxe-and-relaxed athleisure movement is the dominant force in menswear right now-and in outdoorsv Vancouver, it's a way of life. This is the birthplace of Reigning Champ (terry-cloth gurus who treat their sweatshirts, tees, and shorts with suiting-worthy reverence) and Wings + Horns (Canada's softer, cozier take on Scandinavian austerity), not to mention Lululemon (the voga and CrossFit kings). Herschel Supply and its trail-inspired,









Toronto > Has Incredible Shopping in Store

> Yeah, with all the walking around, it feels like shopping in New York. But even N.Y.C. doesn't have October's Very Own a.k.a. the Drake store, where vou've gotta leave carrying at least one piece with an owl on it so people know you're cool. Six blocks away (look for the hidden alley), you'll find Klaxon Howl, a hardwood-floored coach house packed with heritage wear like iean iackets and boots. Cab it to Muttonhead (which is kinda like the Canadian version of Supreme), double back to Oak + Fort (Canada's answer to John Elliott), and then stroll to hype-beast

heaven Haven (where you'll raid your savings account for rare goods from Visvim and White Mountaineering). Finish at Roots, the outfitter that's been synonymous with Canadian style for 43 years.







Montreal > Has All the Latest Swerves on Parisian Style

French simplicity... but sexier We've always drooled over the minimalist bags from Want Les Essentiels, and that goes double for the label's justlaunched sneaker line, which uses subtle stitchingnot neon colors or garish logos-to get your attention.

French denim... but weirder Montreal's Naked & Famous experiments with fabrics the way Timothy Leary did with LSD-giddily, and scientifically. Hence coffee-dyed selvage jeans that sound absurd but look amazing.

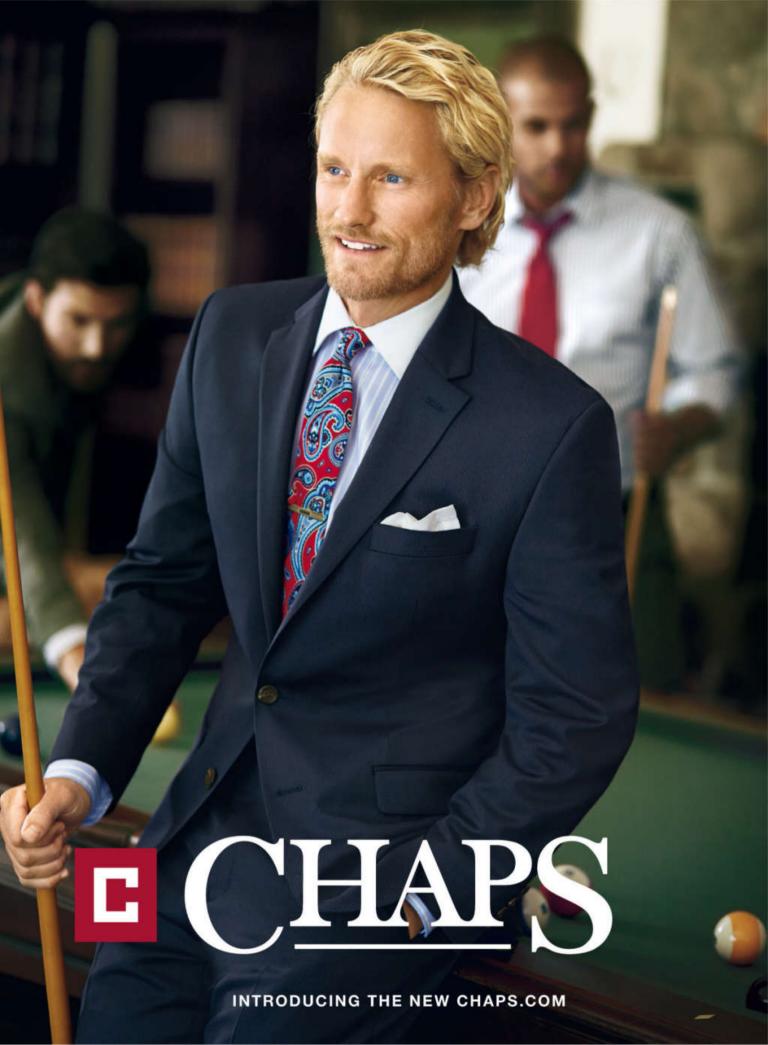
French street style...but punker Skater staples-like hoodies with yinyang symbols, and five-panel caps in microsuederepresent the two pillars of Raised by Wolves: serious craftsmanship and a bad attitude. -NICK MARINO







50 GQ.COM NOVEMBER 2015



The **Suited** Man

Do Some Lines at the Club

Can you hear the haters? "You can't wear corduroy to the club," they grumble. They're wrong. Start with a black polo, then layer with a sweater in this season's Most Valuable Color:

camel. The beauty of corduroy is that it doesn't need to be creased and pressed-so pop your collar (the jacket, not the polo), push up your sleeves, and sip that sweet haterade.

Suit (three-piece) \$1,298 Brooks Brothers, Sweater \$225 J.Crew. Polo shirt \$425 Dolce & Gabbana. Watch Smart Turnout, Backpack Coach Men's.





Loosen Up for the Weekend

To those who'd call a suit too restrictive: Your complaints end with corduroy. Start with a not-soserious cobalt blue, then pair with a sweater and clean sneaks. It's all the soft swagger of those fruit-colored sweat suits rappers used to wear, but you look ten times sharper than Puffy's weed carrier.

Suit (cotton-cashmere) \$4,055 Belvest. Sweater \$199 Lands' End. Pocket square Hav-A-Hank. Watch Omega. Bag Louis Vuitton, Beanie Brunello Cucinelli.

Pay Respect to the Convertible Corduroy Suit

By now you know it's been liberated from its reputation as a stuffy college-prof uniform. But as Gotham star Cory Michael Smith can attest, the corduroy suit won't just be your favorite new suit-it'll also be the most versatile one you own



Start Looking Money

Cory Michael Smith may have to get used to sporting a green suit—on Gotham he plays Edward Nygma, the oddball scientist who'll eventually become the Riddler. Well, we solved this one: It's easy if

you choose a workswith-everything hue like hunter green. Add a flannel buttonfront and a gymissue sweatshirt, and there's nothing insane (or superherospandexed) about your new don't-callit-casual Friday look.

Suit \$549 Indochino. Sweatshirt \$148 Todd Snyder + Champion. Shirt \$390 Thom Browne New York. Tie \$65 Tommy Hilfiger. Shoes \$820 Church's. Pocket square Ivy Prepster. Watch Louis Vuitton. Where to buy it? Go to GQ.com/go/fashiondirectories



Take Your Cord to Work Today

Your fourpoint game plan for citifying a corduroy two-piece: Thin wales (a.k.a. "lines"). No elbow pads. A little extra structure in the jacket to prevent

adjunct-professor sagginess. Then ground it all with a dark shirt and tie. That's how you graduate cordurov from chalkboard to chairman of the board.-SAM SCHUBE

Suit \$1,500 Ring Jacket. Shirt \$325 Burberry London. Tie \$19, tie bar \$15 The Tie Bar. Pocket square Brunello Cucinelli.



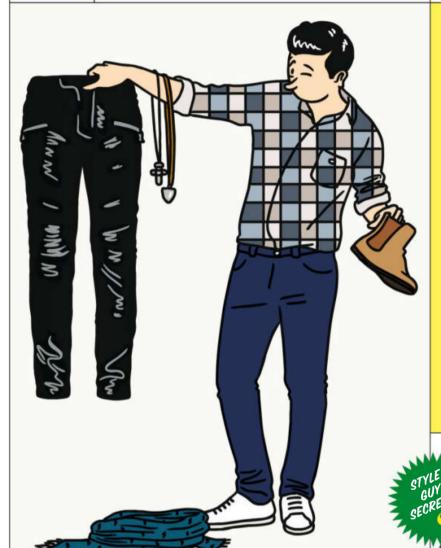
PROGRESS TO SEIKO

SeikoUSA.com

AVAILABLE AT MACY'S AND MACYS.COM

M The Style Guy

This month, GO style guru Mark Anthony Green explains why fancy tie knots are a "not" and how to dress for the rock-star life you want, not the life you have



> Sometimes on the subway or the elevator l'Il notice a well-dressed woman who has the label sticking out of her dress or shirt in back. Should I say something? Or reach out and fix it for her? » I was raised in the Midwest. We're a helpful, transparent species. Politely letting strangers know about toilet paper on their shoes or an uncooperative tag is practically a hobby of ours. So sure, if you can discreetly clue her in, by all means. But you should never, ever, seriously never, reach out and tuck a woman's tag back into place if you don't know herhell, even if you do. Worst-case scenario. it turns out to be Ronda Rousey. and she breaks your arm. There is no best-case scenario.

> My co-worker insists on tying his tie with a double-Windsor knot. I told him it looks dated. What do you say? » I'm on your side. And at the risk of starting a war with sartorial old-schoolers, I'll add: The double-Windsor knot, which is twice the size of the tried-and-true four-in-hand. has never looked good. Ties are meant to visually elongate vour torso, give you that standing-tall look. A bloated wad of silk just under your chin doesn't flatter. Which is why I would commit high treason to keep any old photos of me wearing a double Windsor from ever appearing on the World Wide Web.

It seems like every designer is making rock-star clothes. Celebs look cool wearing them, but I'm a dad who works in I.T. Can I pull them off without looking like a poser?

> I've bought a few pieces of clothing with heavy lead-singer stylings that I thought made me look like denim-and-chains rock god Lenny Kravitz but then, when I got home and looked in the mirror, made me look like shopping-at-Ann-Taylor, bad-style Lenny Kravitz. The line is thin. Your reservations are justified. The key to trying rock-star style is to dip your toes, literally, with a pair of Chelsea boots. They'll team up seamlessly with your go-to jeans, a tee or button-front shirt, and a blazer. That way you look like yourself, just with some kick-ass boots on. If that's working, you can graduate to moto jeans, collarbone-baring tees, and guitar lessons.

The Style Guy is in! Send questions to styleguy@GQ.com or @GQStyleGuy.

Get on Top of the Topcoat

Topcoats are back with a vengeance-well, actually, it's two separate vengeances. The difference is in the shoulder seam. On the left, you have your slouchy, boxy Kanye-approved take. On the right, the more tailored Bradley Cooperworthy version. Neither type is better-the point is to make sure you don't Yeezy when you want to Cooper, or vice versa. Which one will I be wearing? Slouchy three days a week, sartorial three days a week, and rotating on Sundays.



Introducing Carmelo the Continental

This season, with a little help from an iconic Italian suiting house, Carmelo Anthony's gone from being an underrated player in the NBA style game to dressing like he owns the whole damn team

> "Walking around with my teammates from two years ago was like a fashion show," Anthony says. "We had Tyson Chandler, who's into high fashion. Amar'e would have on a fur vest, maybe fur boots, you never knew. Iman Shumpert was the young gun." But not Melo. Just like on the court, his style's always been quieter, considered, and, well, mellow. Slim-and-trim suits. Pocket squares that stay creased and crisp, rather than shoot skyward like fireworks. An ever growing collection of handmade hats. It all adds up to "grownman shit," as Anthony

calls his look. Lately, in fact, he's been seeking out the Milanese masters at Ermenegildo Zegna for advice on everything from made-to-order double-breasted suits to cashmere turtlenecks: "They're the O.G.'s. What they're about, I'm about." See, in a league of showboaters, peacocks, and Westbrooks, the Knicks' eight-time all-star doesn't do suicide sprints from one fad to the next. Here's why his sartorial shooting percentage is off the charts. -MARK ANTHONY GREEN

Suit, \$5,395, and turtleneck, \$990, by Ermenegildo Zegna Couture. Pocket square and watch by Ermenegildo Zegna. Available at select Ermenegildo Zegna boutiques; 212-421-4488.



THIS IS YOUR WAKE-UP CALL TO HAVE MORE WAKE-UP CALL S. WAKE-UP CALL S.

Fly toward something better with the help of 80,000 employees who do everything they can to help you explore what's possible.



Gotta Have a Quick First Step

"I was one of the first players in the league to wear the double-breasted suit," Melo brags. Which means there are a lot of very tall, very rich men who owe him royalties. "I wore it with a tie at first. But when everyone started wearing the DR Lidtched the

tie. It was just too typical." Whether you're trying to outshine this year's top draft picks or the sharp-dressed guy from a few cubicles down, be prepared for your style moves to be stolen—and then adapt when they are. Keep 'em guessing; keep 'em chasing.

Suit, \$4,995, and shirt, \$695, by Ermenegildo Zegna Couture.



58 GQ.COM NOVEMBER 2015



Style Is a Head Game

For a guy who shoots first and asks questions later, it's a little weird to hear Melo admit to ever being gun-shy. "I was afraid of this color at first," he says. "Not too many people can pull this off." Anthony wasn't certain he was one of those people until he visited Milan, the mecca for any well-dressed man. "The vibe was right, it was Fashion Week, so I figured I'd test it out. Then, once I wore it, I was like, 'Damn.'"
We're not saying
you should blow your
SkyMiles to break
in a purple polo, but
know this: A vacation
is the perfect time
to go big with your
style. Pack boldly.

+

Polo, \$990, and pants, \$1,500, by Ermenegildo Zegna Couture. Available at select Ermenegildo Zegna boutiques; 212-421-4488.

NBA players changed the game. You could never find designer shoes over a size 12, and now they can't make enough. XXL shirts are still slim. That's because of us, too."-carmelo anthony

TOM FORD NOIR

THE NEW NOIR FRAGRANCES FOR MEN AND WOMEN AVAILABLE AT BLOOMINGDALE'S, NEIMAN MARCUS, NORDSTROM, SAKS FIFTH AVENUE & SEPHORA

OPEN TO EXPERIENCE

TOM FORD NOIR

POUR FEMME
EAU DE PARFUM



OPEN TO EXPERIENCE

TOM FORD NOIR EXTREME

EAU DE PARFLIN

THE GENTLEMEN'S FUND



GQ honors 2015 ambassador

MARK RUFFALO

for his work with

WATER DEFENSE

THE SOLUTIONS PROJECT

The truth about protecting the environment isn't that we need to fight for clean water or convert to renewable energy. It's not one thing or the other; it's all part of the same whole, and it's all urgent.

That's why Mark Ruffalo founded Water Defense and co-chairs the 100% campaign for The Solutions Project.

As an actor and filmmaker, Mark's ability to find the unique, human truth in any story has earned him multiple awards, including a Golden Globe and a Screen Actors Guild Award. Mark is equally committed to his work as an outspoken environmental activist. He created Water Defense to provide people with the facts about our water, to make sure that our water is clean, and to hold polluters accountable for the contamination they cause.

As a founding board member of The Solutions Project, Mark started the 100% campaign to make new clean energy more affordable and accessible for everyone, providing people in every state with energy choices that protect our air, water, and health.

Mark's special brand of activism reflects one of the deepest truths of all: that the best solutions involve everyone.

Get involved at

WATERDEFENSE.ORG and 100.ORG



Our Long National Nightmare of Campaign Style Has Begun

Look, we're not saying we want the next leader of the free world to traipse around lowa in leather moto pants, but as Cintra Wilson wonders, would it kill all the milquetoasts running for president to dress with a little attitude?

Whether we want it to or not, clothing always reflects the psychology of whoever's wearing it—which is why, my fellow Americans, we should be deeply concerned by the wardrobes of our 2016 presidential candidates. Whereas dapper pols like JFK once wore Wayfarers and skinny ties, today's White House wannabes are now so exhaustively focusgrouped (and are so terrified of making any fashion mistake) that they've drained themselves of sartorial charisma.

This election's early favorites are a yachtload of honkies who all default to boxy charcoal gray suits, starchy white shirts, and shiny silk neckties (nearly always red, regardless of party affiliation). It's a classic high-contrast Leadership color palette I like to call "Fascist Contemporary." For their daytime-casual look, the candidates remove their jackets and unconvincingly roll up their sleeves for a "changing my own tires for the good of America" appearance. Just as murky, inscrutable, inoffensive content is their default choice when it comes to rhetoric, their campaign uniforms seem expressly chosen to obscure their humanity.

It has always been difficult to tell the many Republicans apart, both ideologically and sartorially, and indeed Mike Huckabee, John Kasich, and Lindsey Graham dress so identically, and so without a trace of personality, they could





all be represented by the same Lego character. But the other candidates from both parties find their own special ways to, shall we say, distinguish themselves.

Crusty progressive Bernie Sanders stands out as the most consistently disheveled candidate, a man whose style muse seems to be Jack Klugman and who can be easily imagined waddling unshaven onto the White House lawn to retrieve his newspaper, wearing a flannel bathrobe, tube socks, and BluBlockers.

Jeb Bush, the fussiest politician since Mitt Romney, has the visual distinction of Reaganing harder than the others. His Dial-A-Prayer hair and higher-thread-count suits exude a "fuck you" wealth that the other rich candidates take care to avoid in the interest of wooing voters beyond just the two Koch brothers.

Ted Cruz, a Hispanic Canadian-Texan, favors dark suits that, combined with his helmet hair and concerned-mortician demeanor, suggest he will bury America with somber dignity. It is difficult not to notice that with a pencil mustache, he would look exactly like the dashingly ghoulish Gomez Addams.

The ladies of the race, Carly Fiorina and Hillary Clinton, have their own closet problems. Both are given to loud monochromatic suits in interchangeable electric blue or vermilion, projecting just the right blend of femininity and alpha gusto, with a shrill top note of "Send in the drones!"

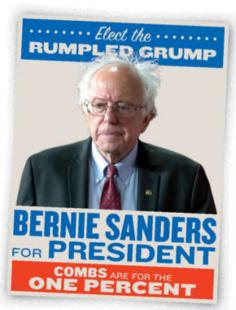
Nobody really knows why Donald Trump feels qualified or even wants to be president, but he has always dressed out grandiose delusions of ruling the world. Analysts have suggested that his radical hairstyle, that virile strawberry angora haystack, is a business power move intended to invoke confusion and fear—which of course it does, like a wig made of live snakes. Lately, however, he's been covering his coif with a MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN baseball cap, either to convince voters that he has the common touch or to protect them from being turned into stone.

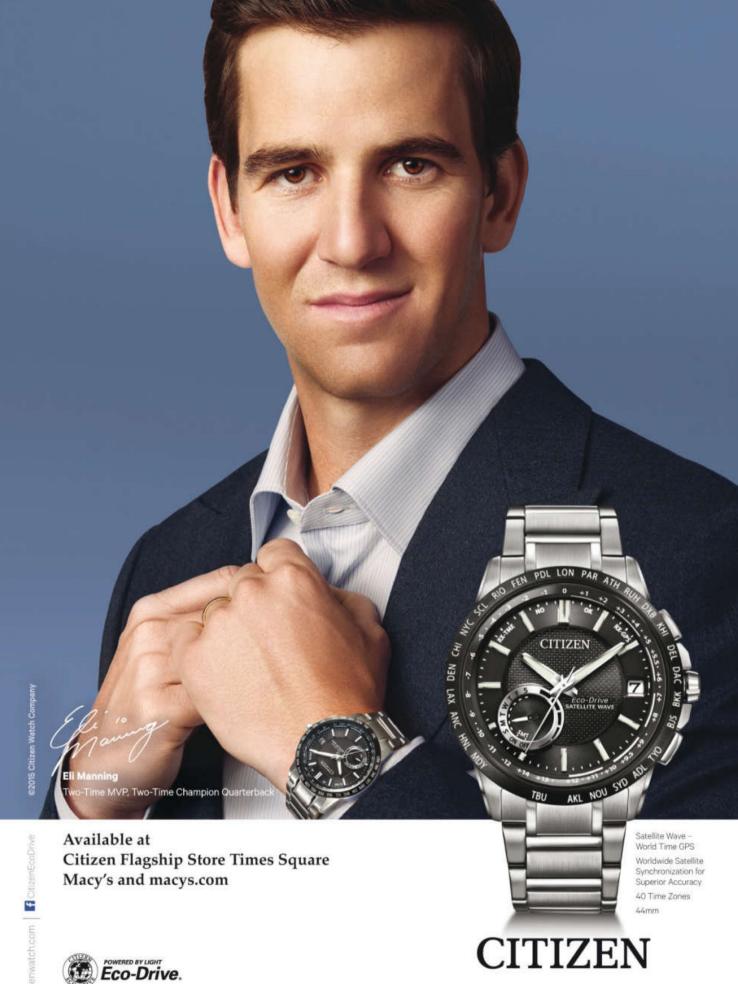
If we're going to elect one of these jokers to represent the world's most powerful office, is it too much to ask that he or she have at least *some* style? Other countries already snicker at us because America can't seem to make the cognitive leap that civilization equals culture, and culture equals art.

As fashion is our most personal, most intimate art form—one we all practice every single day, regardless of what we wear—we oughtn't let our next president shuffle around the globe looking like some federal rube with his/her own reinforced changing bunker beneath the Nordstrom at the Pentagon mall.

Aren't We the People embarrassed enough as it is?

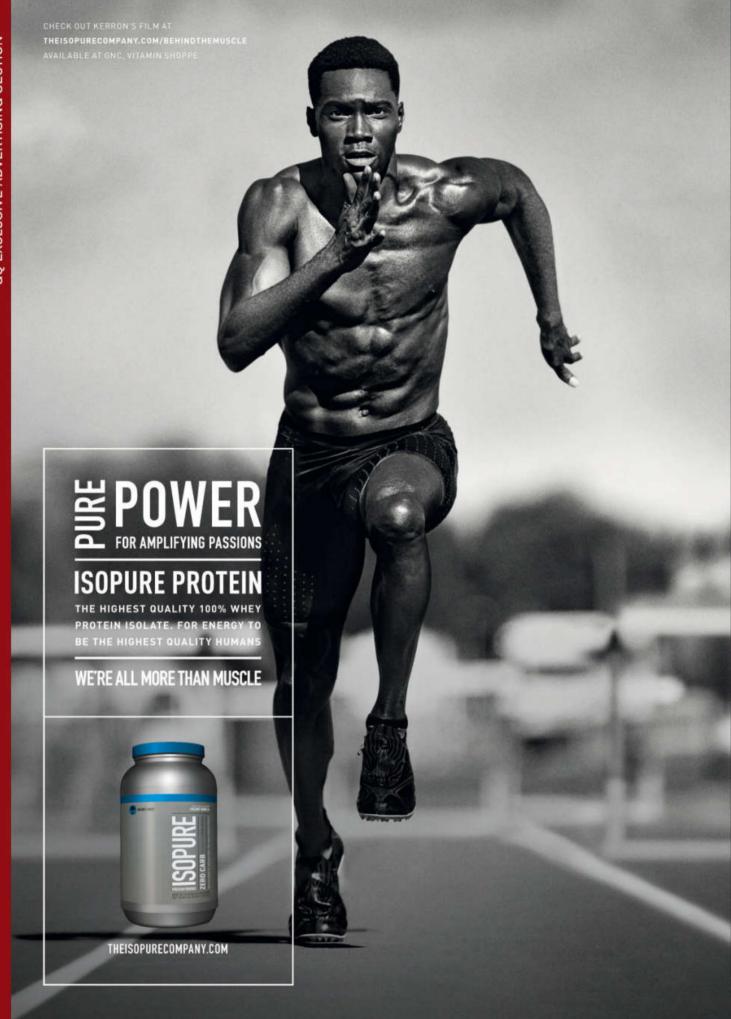
CINTRA WILSON *is the author of* Fear and Clothing: Unbuckling American Style.





A watch that never needs a battery.

BETTER STARTS NOW



NATURALLY AND ARTIFICIALLY FLAVORED CREAMY VANILLA



Insider Info



Plant Yourself in a Better Home

Japanese visionary Satoshi Kawamoto has become a cult figure in the interior-design world with his growing empire of stylish plant boutiques. His advice? Your space comes alive with some vegetation, but that doesn't mean getting prissy about the green stuff



Kawamoto put roots down in the States with his first Green Fingers emporium outside Japan.

The whole Green Fingers aesthetic is about contrasting greenery with other design elements.

"If you see a plant you like." Kawamoto says. "just pick it up from the store and *then* think about how to place it in your space.

> Satoshi Kawamoto first became a star in Tokyo, a town so fixated on design that even its toilets are spectacular. This year he opened an outpost of his Green Fingers chain on Manhattan's Lower East Side. treating cacti and ferns with the same curatorial eye you'd find in a furniture showroom or an art gallery. The place sells vintage workwear, too. Because in Kawamoto's mind, a man's plants look best in context with his other elements of style.-NICK MARINO



Plants Are Like Pants

"I want people to pick out plants as though they're choosing their clothes or accessoriesthey look better mixed with something else you already have. The idea is to connect plants to everything else in your life and harmonize them. If vou place a plant together with a candle or a frame you bought somewhere else, it creates a totally different environment in your room."



Perfection Is Boring

"I cannot be comfortable in an environment where everything is perfect. I see so many new condos designed where everything is so clean and white, with straight lines, but I like the idea of adding some imperfection by mixing in branches or something wild."



Bag It Up

"I buy things and can never throw them away, so I have a pile of bags at homeand I use those as containers for plants. Sometimes I put a glass jar inside a bag and put plants or fresh-cut flowers inside. You can use extra tote bags or even paper bags with a cool logo.'

"Think of plants as if vou're buying cut flowers. Even if your plant dies, you can replace it with a new one. Cut flowers last only maybe a week. whereas plants-even if they don't get enough light-last a few months.' -SATOSHI KAWAMOTO

Think Small > Your Houseplant Starter Kit

· You don't need a monstrosity out of Little Shop of Horrors. Set these little guvs on bookshelves. kitchen counters, toilet tanks, or your desk at workanywhere that needs a spruce-up.



Moon cactus



Air plant



Snake plant



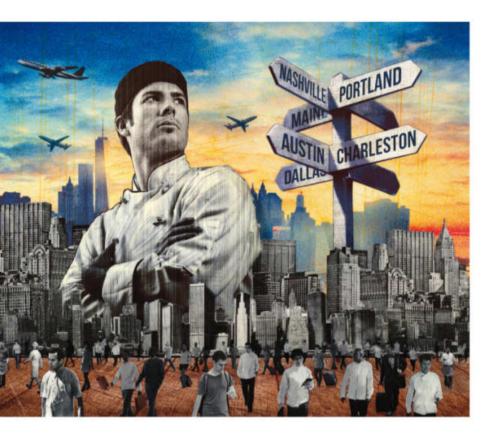
Elephant's ear



M

David Chang's Kitchen





If You Can't Stand the Heat, Move the Whole Damn Kitchen

Some bad news, if you live in Gotham, L.A., S.F., or Chicago: We're in the midst of a bona fide kitchen crisis, Chef Chang says, a mass exodus of cooks who can no longer afford the rent in our priciest cities. The flip side? There's never been a tastier time to live in—or travel to—the whole entire rest of America

Here's a sad fact about the state of the restaurant business in New York City: If I were starting my career right now, there's almost no chance I would start it here.

I just couldn't afford it. N.Y.C. has become such a crushingly expensive and difficult place for a young cook to live—to the point where restaurateurs like me are having a harder time than ever finding talent to staff our kitchens.

But here's the happy side effect, a chicken-egg phenomenon that led to and now feeds this huge shift that's redefining the flavor of America: You no longer need to come to New York or San Francisco to learn to be a great line cook. And that's because so many of the talented chefs who, in a different era, would have trained in Europe or the uptown kitchens of Manhattan (and then opened their own places in Brooklyn or on the Lower East Side) are now leaving the city altogether and fanning out everywhere, especially to college towns that support some of the most vibrant, kick-ass food scenes in the country.

Let me go back a few years earlier into my imaginary alternative history. If I were 17 right now, I wouldn't even go to culinary school. Instead I'd apply to a big public university—probably
Texas, Georgia, Michigan, or Washington—
and get a college degree while working
in a kitchen on the side. In Austin, I'd try
to work for Paul Qui at **Qui** or one of
his **East Side King** food trucks. In Athens,
I'd send my (at that point nonexistent)
résumé to **5 & 10** or **The National** and try
to learn from Hugh Acheson. If I were
a Wolverine, I'd try to work at **Zingerman's**in Ann Arbor. And in Seattle, I'd find out
if Matt Dillon was hiring at **Bar Sajor**or **Sitka & Spruce** or **The Corson Building.**

And then, after graduation, maybe my college gig would turn into a full-time job—and eventually lead to a completely different kind of life in a totally different place. I mean, if you can become a worldclass cook in a town where the cost of living is lower, with easy access to amazing ingredients from incredible farms, why wouldn't you? Wouldn't it be nice to go for a run someplace where the air is a little cleaner before working a grueling shift in the kitchen? There's also something to be said for being the biggest fish in a smaller pond, like Gerard Craft in St. Louis (Niche, Taste, Brasserie, Pastaria) or Justin Yu at Oxheart in Houston...

Okay, daydream over. I'm here in New York City and I'm here to stay—I love this town and always will. Fortunately for me, I was able to establish my business before the start-up and maintenance costs went so insanely off the charts, and I remain optimistic that we'll find a solution to the culinary labor shortage here in Gotham. Somehow.

Meanwhile, I know I'll continue to lose cooks who leave for (literally) greener pastures. Does this piss me off? Only that their food won't be available in my hometown. But that feeling is more than offset by the knowledge that wherever I travel in this country, there are great new places to try—and talented young chefs ready to take me to school.

PRACTICE MAKES PATRÓN.

FROM HARVESTING THE FINEST WEBER BLUE AGAVE TO HAND-NUMBERING EVERY LABEL, IT TAKES MORE THAN SIXTY HANDS TO CRAFT EACH BOTTLE OF PATRÓN TEQUILA. THIS EXCESSIVE ATTENTION TO DETAIL MAY NOT SOUND EFFICIENT, BUT PERFECTION RARELY IS.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO MAKE SENSE TO BE PERFECT.







Outerwear is you. Show your inner self on the outside.







with the state of the state of

once made tunes sound like CB trucker chatter. Now fixes to Bluetooth have made going cordless as rocking as it is freeing. Even Poindexter audiophiles would be swayed by the richness and clarity of the **Bowers &**Wilkins P5 Wireless (\$400), right. The Urbanears Plattan ADV Wireless (\$99), top, upgrades our favorite affordable pair with a slick touch-control system (tap or swipe on the ear cup to change the volume or tracks). And while we've knocked the Doctor's work before, the subtle new color schemes-we dig the gray-over-black—and sonic reboot (they're not just built for bass-drops anymore) of the **Beats by Dre Solo2 Wireless** (\$250), *left*, prove that old tech can still learn new tricks.

Special Section

By Jon Wilde

Photograph by Jason Pietra

 $1 \text{ of } 3 \rightarrow$

The Overwhelmed Man's Guide to the Season's Best Tech

Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and a Best Buy's worth of new gadget launches are conspiring to make you wonder: What do I want? What do I need? And what the hell is up with curved TVs? We have answers



RADO HYPERCHROME MATCH POINT LIMITED EDITION
PLASMA HIGH-TECH CERAMIC. METALLIC LOOK. MODERN ALCHEMY.



TIME IS THE ESSENCE WE ARE MADE OF

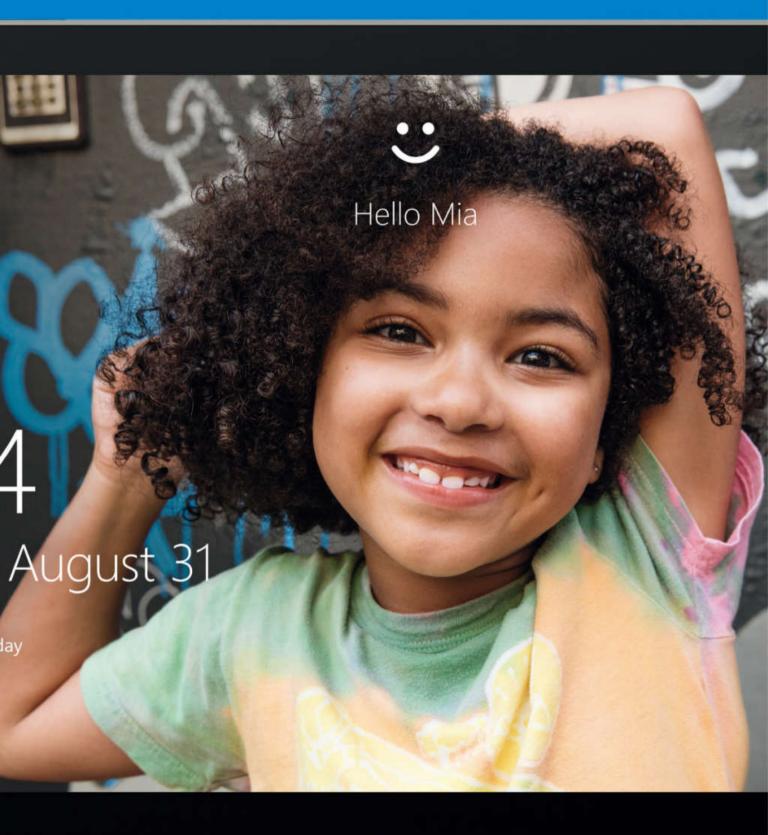


Your face is your password

Welcome to Windows 10. Now with Windows Hello, you can log in simply with a smile. With Microsoft Edge, write directly on the web with your finger or pen, draw or take notes and then share what you did. Talk to Cortana and she'll get to know you over time. And you'll know how to use the Start menu pretty much instantly. The future starts now, for all of us.

Upgrade to Windows 10 and do great things. Free for a limited time.







Special Section

Tech Answers

2 of 3



What's the Point of a Fancy Router?

Back before your coffeemaker needed a Wi-Fi signal, only a few pieces of household tech required your router's attention. Now count 'em. If your old router's a traffic cop, the \$200 Google OnHub router is airtraffic control. Since this is the future, setup and control are handled via a simple phone app. It doesn't look like an alien death-spider. And its 13 internal antennas will kill dead spots and tamp down buffering just as a sword swings in Game of Thrones. In other words: This may be the first router you'll never swear at.

When Should I Upgrade My...



...Smartphone?

· Three hours and 16 minutesaccording to a 2014 study, that's how long the average smartphone user spent staring at a pocket-size slab of glass each day. In other words, you use that thing a lot. If civilization is doomed to collapse as we shun human contact for assimilation into the Borg, might as well not worry about a depleted battery or slowing software. Upgrade every other year.



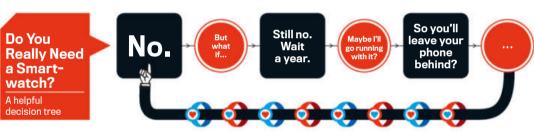
..Streaming-TV Thingy?

• This fall brought a major update for the Apple TV (an app store, a trick remote, and Siri), plus improved Wi-Fi for the new Google Chromecast and Roku 4 (less buffering!). Have any of the above? Get the new version.



... Activity Tracker?

· Wait for now The most capable new versions, like the Microsoft Band 2, have nextlevel sensors that can finally provide useful data (like real-time heart-rate monitoring), but trackers still look unavoidably dorky on your wrist.





There's no onesize-fits-all laptop, so a better question might be: What trade-off are you willing to make? The two-pound Apple MacBook (from \$1,300) is absurdly thin and light-the

"after" to every other laptop's "before" photo. But that lust-worthyand essentially portfree-design means you need a dongle to plug in a camera's memory card or your phone's charging cable. Dongles: not lust-worthy.

The MacBook Pro 13" with Retina display (from \$1,300) is your best doesit-all workhorse, with the caveat that its 3.5-pound weight means you're lugging more than toting if you leave the house. Splitting the difference between

A half inch thin at

its fattest!

both Jobs-tops is the Dell XPS 13 (from \$800). It compensates for slightly blah style with a bottomless 12-hour battery, a screen with a barelythere bezel, and the newly decluttered Windows X OS. Sadly, none of these can make doing work on a Sunday not suck.

Look for in a New Laptop?



Special Section

Tech Answers

3 of 3



Maybe try reddit.com/r /shinyporn? (NO, STOP, DON'T—it was a joke.) If you want to blanket yourself in the cuddly analog warmth of the LP renaissance, you'll need more than just a turntable. Here's your \$1,200 recordspinning rookie setup.

1. The Player

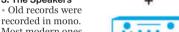
· Can't raid your parents' attic? Try the **U-Turn Orbit** Plus. It's affordable at \$309 and focused on quality sound, with a thick acrylic platter and an above-its-pay-grade Grado cartridge. (Just nod.) Or step up to a Pro-Ject turntable. But don't blow your budget, because you also need...

2. The Amplifier

• Up until the '80s or so, most amps and receivers had the phono input that a turntable connects to. Not so much anymore. You could go the vintage-amp route if you're willing to hunt around audiogeek forums or eBay. Or just pick up a shiny new
Marantz PM5005 (\$500), one of the rare modern amps

3. The Speakers

recorded in mono. Most modern ones are mixed in stereo. Point is, you only need two quality bookshelf speakers. Wire up a pair of the surprisingly bassy **Wharfedale** Diamond 220 (\$350) or the intensely ${\rm detailed}\; \textbf{KEF}\; \textbf{Q100}$ (\$550) and prepare to ruin Spotify for yourself forever.





Does My TV Really Need **Curves?**





→ Unless you're trying to wall-mount one in a yurt, the curved screens of the highest-end TVs aren't worth the extra outlay. You could also ignore TVs with built-in apps (you're better off with an Apple TV-type device), voice control (never works), and 4K screens-the higher-than-hi-def resolution for which little content currently exists. Problem is. the best sets include some (or all) of those specs, anyway. What you actually want from a new TV is local LED dimming for a high-contrast picture, and you'll find it in both the Vizio M-series (\$850 for the 55-inch) and the Samsung UHD JU7100 (\$1,600 for the 55-inch). Splashing out on the Samsung nets you smoother, truerlooking video and a sleeker design, with a blacked-out ultra-slim bezel. Sounds petty, but let's be honest: You'll be staring at that thing a lot.

RECORD PLAYER: STUART TYSON, PROP STYLIST; CLAIRE TEDALDI AT HALLEY RESOURCES. SCARLETT JOHANSSON: WALT DISNEY STUDIOS MOTION PICTURES/EVERETT COLLECTION. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION FOR EDITORIAL PURPOSES ONLY.



HAND-WOUND MECHANICAL MOVEMENT EXCLUSIVE TO TISSOT AND A SCRATCH-RESISTANT DOMED SAPPHIRE CRYSTAL WITH DOUBLE ANTIREFLECTIVE COATING. INNOVATORS BY TRADITION.





THE (SECRETS) TO LIVING IN STYLE

A clean-cut look with impeccable style, some well-timed banter delivered with unshakable confidence—there's nothing quite like having that perfect on-point moment, While you may not have the keys to a supercar in one hand and a supermodel in the other (yet), here are a few secrets that every aspiring man of mystery should be briefed on.









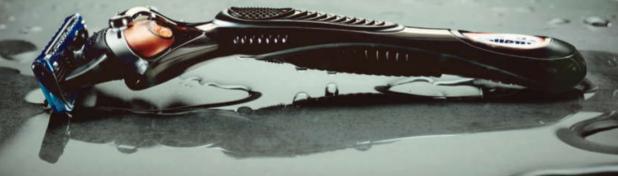
NEVER SAY NO TO ADVENTURES.

ALWAYS SAY YES. OTHERWISE

YOU WILL LEAD A VERY DULL LIFE.

San Flewing

IAN FLEMING, CREATOR, JAMES BOND NOVELS



SPECTRE

007

ONLY IN THEATERS

Bring out the 007 in you. The Gillette FlexBall™ moves like no other razor to get virtually every hair.

SPECTRE, evz— and related James Bond Trademarks @1962-2015 Danjaq, LLC and United Artists Corporation. SPECTRE, evz and related James Bond Trademarks are trademarks of Danjaq, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

The IAN FLEMING brands, image rights and quotes from Ian Fleming are owned by and used under licence from The Ian Fleming Estate. Quotes from Ian Fleming? Publications Limited 1957-1964. @2015 P&G Gillette





FALL 2015 AGJEANS.COM

THE

WHAT TO SAY
YOU WERE
DOING WHEN YOU
WERE REALLY
LISTENING TO
JUSTIN BIEBER'S
NEW ALBUM

• **WATCHING** The 33: A survival tale of trapped miners, starring Antonio Banderas

• **READING** Umberto Eco's <u>Numero Zero:</u> Italy's smartest writer takes on Mussolini

• LISTENING TO Joanna Newsom's <u>Divers:</u> Orchestral folk from everyone's favorite twee harpist

83 GQ.COM

11/15



 \rightarrow

AZIZ ANSARI'S CAREER is so 2015, and by that we mean it's diversified: ensemble greatness as Tom on *Parks and Recreation*, which ended its seven-season run in February; authorial greatness as the writer of

Modern Romance, a massively selling book about dating in the age of Tinder; stand-up greatness in a special from a headlining gig at Madison Square Garden—a feat typically reserved for comedians with the last name C.K. And now arrives the cord-cutting Netflix series Master of None, which he wrote and directed and stars in. RACHEL SYME spoke to Ansari as he was preparing to take his first (and well-deserved) vacation in over a year.

GQ: Glad to hear you are taking some time off! Have you been totally exhausted?

Aziz Ansari: I'm good now. You know, during the shooting of *Master of None*, it was really hard. With a show like that, you're the main person and you're in every scene and you're directing and you're answering a million questions. The whole time, my left ear was ringing and I had a twitch in my left eye, all because of stress. But it's so fun! I'm not complaining about it.

Speaking of the show, how are you feeling about the comparisons to *Louie*, where people will say it's a thinly veiled character that's kind of you but not you?

I mean, that's been happening forever, right? All those Woody Allen movies. I would have just named the character Aziz, but I didn't want him to be a comedian, and it got a little confusing, so we just called the guy Dev. But he's more of a proxy for me.

You cast your real parents to play your parents on the show, right?

Yeah, those are my real parents.

They're good actors!

Yeah, it's crazy. I was showing a friend that episode, and he was like, "That woman playing your mom is great." I was like, "That *is* my mom." But the trick with that stuff—like with my dad, the first time he was trying to be funny. I was like, "No, no, no, no, no. Just play it very real. I promise if you don't try, it will be very funny." My dad wanted to be in *Parks and Rec*. He'd tell the writers, "Maybe there's like an Indian gastroenterologist that comes to town!" When I realized I could put him in this show, I told him, "But this isn't a cameo. This is serious. You have to stay here for two weeks," and he was totally down and got an acting coach. I feel like out of everyone we had on the show, he made the crew break more than anybody. All his choices are really weird and unexpected.

The show follows
Dev, a neurotic
New Yorker played
by Ansari, as he
tries to deal with very
modern problems
(like teaching one's
parents how to
use an iPad). To see
an old woman run
away from a nursing
home in search of
good pasta is worth
it alone.

The comedian and writer who died in February at the age of 30 of a drug overdose. From Aziz's tribute: "I hope people reading this realize what an incredibly unique man you were, and what brutal a loss it is for those who knew you and also for those who never had the pleasure."

Aziz is just as shocked as we are when she comes at him with all the sex appeal in her arsenal.

An actual, mega-size domino sequence. In the shape of a cat.

His mother's reply, when Dev asks what she did on her first day in America: "I sat on the couch and cried."

Next time I should sit at the bar.

You wrote the most beautiful tribute to Harris Wittels in February. Now that the show is coming out, do you feel that his presence is in it?

Oh, yes, it's just so bittersweet. It's heartbreaking, you know? Did you see the episode with Claire Danes?

Yes! She was funny.

Harris came up with that whole domino-effect idea. It's rough, man. That whole thing was really very hard. We dedicated the whole series to him. I'm sad he's not around to see how it turned out, but I'm happy I got to spend a lot of time with him before we were making it.

You have put together at least two different hours of original stand-up material this year. How do you manage to be so prolific?

I take whatever's in my head and start talking about that stuff and figuring out a point of view. Lately I have been dealing with frustration about the Internet and then all the police brutality in the news. When you can talk about this stuff with a group of people and hear people laughing, you realize, "Oh, I'm not alone in this feeling of frustration."

Technology seems to be a huge theme of your comedy—why we are addicted to it, how it changes the way we treat one another.

I just hate how much I use my phone, and I try all these ways to fight it. Right now I have some sort of a block thing that you use for kids, and I had my girlfriend put in the password so I don't know it, and in the morning I don't use it. There is good stuff to read there, amazing commentaries on the human condition. But instead I was just looking at photos of Ludacris on vacation and feeling like, "What am I doing?" With the Internet, it's like we're on page 2,000,000 of the shittiest book ever, but we can't put it down.

NON-MEMOIR BOOKS BY COMEDIANS WORTH READING



The Book with No Pictures by B. J. Novak A children's book that, as promised, contains no images, just words. Funny ones.



Modern Romance by Aziz Ansari Learn how to nail dating in 2015. (Or become disillusioned and turn into a hermit.)



My Custom Van by Michael Ian Black Vignettes on subjects like erotic fiction and DJ names. The best part: They're, like, three pages apiece.



I Like You: Hospitality Under the Influence by Amy Sedaris An actually useful (but still hilarious) take on hosting. With recipes!



Shopgirl
by Steve Martin
A bleak novella
about a young
counter
saleswoman, and
a good break from
the banjo shtick.



From an episode on the subject: "There probably is a Purdeen who runs a convenience store, and I have nothing against him, but why can't there be a Purdeep just once who's like an architect? Or designs mittens? Or does one of the jobs Bradley Cooper's characters do in his movies?"

One thing I really admire about your new show is that it is very diverseit tells the stories of people we don't normally see on television: immigrants, women of a certain age, minority communities.

The two showrunners are me and Alan [Yang], an Indian guy and an Asian guy. So we're going to tell stories that have Indian people and Asian people in them. And we're going to tell them authentically, because that's who we are. Most showrunners are still overwhelmingly white dudes, and their lives are very white. So I don't think it's about them going, "All right. Let me put one Native American guy in there." No, let's have a Native American guy do his own show. There needs to be a transgender Native American show, and the poster should be four transgender Native American people and one white guy.

What are your big aspirations from here?

Sometimes I wonder if I really need to do anything. I can just be done. I can just go live in some little town in Italy and run a meat-and-cheese shop and be fine. Then again, you know, when I have some time off, I get bored. And I do like creating things. That gives me a lot of fulfillment. So that's probably why I won't go become a scuba-diving instructor in Jamaica. 🕻 🧟

SELF-HELP

2 Find the Best

Piece of Advice in

an Advice Book

→ GQ vet Jason Gav. a columnist at The Wall Street Journal, doles out more wisdom than a soccer dad. So much, in fact, that he collected it into a book called Little Victories. Here, our favorite nugget.



"No marriage is strong enough to survive two people who disagree about brunch."

OSCAR ODDS

3 Bet on the Bumper Crop of **Badass Ladies with Big Movies**

This month is stacked with performances from some of the very best lady actors alive. Let's weigh the chances of each receiving a nomination for the industry's biggest (or at least highest-profile) honor.



The Actress

Cate Blanchett Carol



Why She

She plays a '50s-era lesbian in love with Rooney Mara but married to Kyle Chandler. How scandalous!

Already well liked,

plum role as a mom

protecting her son.

not a single conceivable reason why she won't.

There is literally

Why She

Won't

Room is almost unbearably tense; you can't vote for her if you can't get through it.

Everyone drools



Angelina Jolie

Sandra Bullock

over her, even when she's in movies that don't deserve her.

She plays a woman

marriage to a man

played by Brad Pitt.

in an imploding

Cinema vérité?

She won five years ago, and this bald gold man rarely strikes twice.

Her layers of tearstreaked eve makeup might steal the award instead.

Elizabeth Olsen



She plays Hank Williams's honkytonker wife. And hey, singing badly won Reese Witherspoon that Oscar.

Singing badly shouldn't have won Reese Witherspoon that Oscar.

Rachel McAdams Spotlight



In a perfectly calibrated and understated true story, she outunderstates all her male co-stars.

Co-star Mark Ruffalo gets the shouty-setpiece scene and thus the Oscarcampaigning dollars.

Secret in Their Eves



Roberts plays a mother suffering the most tragic of tragedies (losing a child). And tragedy = Oscar gold.

gloomfest that begins with an unidentified female body might be wearing on everyone.

The grisly cop

The Bond girl has less chance of winning this than The Rock.

Odds

2:1

5:1

11:1

22:1

57:1

73:1

74:1

1,764,

Léa Seydoux Spectre



She's an exceptionally talented and beautiful actress (See: Blue Is the Warmest Color.)

BACK FOR A LIMITED TIME

The bottle that started it all is back. But it won't be around forever. So crack open a Miller Lite Steinie bottle and enjoy a round while it's still around.

#ITSMILLERTIME





4 Toast the Return of the League of Misfit Toys

The NBA playoffs are thrilling. The NBA season, meanwhile, is a slog made tolerable by the finest collection of oddballs and eccentrics in pro sports. A sampler:



It might be our favorite meme: new Knicks center Lopez's violent vendetta against plushy mascots. He has basically written The Art of (Mascot) War. Here, a summary of his attacks. -SAM SCHURE

MASCOT **METHOD**

Hooper, Detroit Pistons G-Wiz, Washington Wizards The Coyote, San Antonio Spurs Harry the Hawk, Atlanta Hawks Stuff, Orlando Magic

Right hook/strangling Club with arm cast/eye gouge Violent shoving*

*In response to a unified anti-mascot-violence rally



Oh, how we love J. R. Smith. His sleepy eyes. His fondness for contested shots (because open shots are "boring"). His texting game ("You trying to get the pipe?" he told one lady friend). And now, we love him for bringing the hoverboard thingy to the NBA.-DEVIN GORDON

Rudy Gobert

You're no one in the NBA until you've got a nickname. But Rudy Gobert, the Utah Jazz's young seven-footer, has a different problem: He's got too many. Gobert is French (it's pronounced go-BEAR) and a gifted shot-blocker. so he's already been knighted both The Gobert Report and The French Rejection. But we're backing a third option: The Stifle Tower. Let's make it stick.—CLAY SKIPPER

Chandler Parsons

He's dating Leo's ex, he parties with his owner, and he says things—in jest—like "I'm a trendsetter, man. I see it and it turns to gold." (He was talking about a pair of socks.) The Dallas small forward is one of a kind: bottle service in human form.



andre Drummond

In the NBA, there's bold style...and then there's the Pistons big man's bedazzled Timberlands. Andre, please explain.

'My friend Devontae Roper styled me once, and the outfit looked nice—and then he brought out the shoes. And I was like, 'I'm not wearing those!' But he said, 'Trust me, everyone's going to love it.' The reactions l got were crazy."

So will we ever see your coach wearing a pair?

'Never. I would have to pay him, like, a billion dollars."-

James Harden

The Kardashian klan's favorite accessory is this NBA star, and as their Q rating has climbed, so has the pedigree of their playthings.

Khloé + Lamai

Jimmy Butler

What stands out most about the Chicago Bulls shooting guard isn't the all-star ability or the freakish athleticism. It's his pre-game playlist filled with... country music? "I listen to it too loud and get on everybody's nerves," says the East Texas native. Luke Bryan (?)

and Jason Aldean (??) are two of his favorites, and he gets pumped for tip-off with "Loving You Easy," a Zac Brown ballad most commonly heard at weddings. Have any of his teammates come around? 'No," he says. "Zero."—C.s.

Kristaps Porzingis

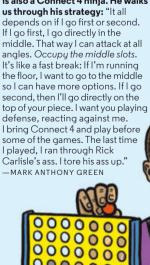
The Knicks rookie is seven feet one and still growing—all skin and bones and tufty blond hair. On draft day, he seemed like a comically on-the-nose caricature of "European Basketball Player." But it turns out the Zinger is a new breed of Latvian kid: His favorite website is World Star Hip Hop, which is pretty much the perfect place to learn about modern America, and our mall fights, street fights, catfights, and sordid rap-world ephemera. Our bet: He'll fit in just fine.—s.s.







The league's most diabolical mind—and freshly minted Sacramento Kings floor generalis also a Connect 4 ninja. He walks us through his strategy: "It all depends on if I go first or second. If I go first, I go directly in the middle. That way I can attack at all angles. Occupy the middle slots. It's like a fast break: If I'm running the floor, I want to go to the middle so I can have more options. If I go second, then I'll go directly on the top of your piece. I want you playing defense, reacting against me. I bring Connect 4 and play before some of the games. The last time I played, I ran through Rick Carlisle's ass. I tore his ass up."



0000000

000000

A CITY WITH A HISTORY IN STEEL SHOWS ITS FUTURE MIGHT JUST BE IN LEATHER.

THE NORTH/SOUTH MESSENGER BAG.



SHINOLA

Where American is made.

DETROIT . NEW YORK . LOS ANGELES . LONDON

SHINOLA.COM

FASHION

He may be as famous for his Instagram exploits partying with models,

Kardashians as for his work cool-ifying the venerable French fashion label Balmain. **But** OLIVIER ROUSTEING, the 30-year-old

buzzy H&M collaboration launches this month. says he's out to upend an

industry that's

too old and too

white to reach

millennials like him. JESSICA PRESSLER

reports from Paris on the Rousteing revolution



Fashion's

OLIVIER ROUSTEING IS OLD. "Old, old," he moans, peering at his reflection in the window of The Klay, the fancy gym in Paris where he takes his morning boxing lessons. He puts down his cigarette and presses his skin upward, miming a face-lift. In less than seven days, the fashion designer will turn 30. "I have definitely lost some of my

BFF





Rousteing, barely 30, and his sculpted cheeks have transformed the stately old house of Balmain.

youth," he says. Not so much, though, that his face doesn't immediately bounce back when he lets it go.

The past few years have moved fast for Rousteing. His relationship with H&M, of all things, puts it in perspective: Eleven years ago, he was standing in line outside the H&M in Bordeaux, waiting with everyone else for Karl Lagerfeld's collection to drop. Eight years ago, he was an assistant at Roberto Cavalli, creating sketches for the Italian label's collaboration with H&M. And now, this month, Rousteing releases his own highly anticipated H&M project—a line inspired by the aristocratic fetishwear he's been producing for nouveau royals like Kanye West and Beyoncé. "They ask you to take some pieces from your first collection, like vintage," Rousteing says, sipping a restorative orange juice. "So it is kind of a celebration, which in a way is kind of scary. It was only five years ago! To me it feels like yesterday!"

A collaboration with a youth brand like H&M is a natural fit for Rousteing, who ever since becoming Balmain's creative director at the age of 25 has brought new life to a label that until recently conjured the smell of musky grandmother perfume. A bright-eyed sylph with a sunny disposition, skin the color of a nonfat soy latte, and a limitless collection of deep V-neck tees, he has managed to bring the septuagenarian fashion house, famous for its heavy embroidery and heavier price tags, into the modern day, not only through his designs but also through force of his persona. With his boundless enthusiasm, he has charmed the jaded fashion industry and racked up recruits to his #BalmainArmy, a collection of models, actors, musicians, and pop-culture icons whom he defines, in his American-accented Frenglish, as "glamorous and beautiful and diverse and confidence and sexy and powerful-especially powerful"-and become something of a celebrity himself, thanks to the duckface selfies he posts on Instagram.

The attention he has brought the house of Balmain has transformed a business that was not long ago facing bankruptcy, even as it has occasionally caused the suits at the label to gulp back a few mon Dieus.

"Yes, I am aware of the rap song 'Anaconda," booms Balmain CEO Emmanuel Diemoz. "I have not been aware of it before,

and yeah, for sure, that was not easy," he goes on, possibly in reference to the awkwardness that ensued when an assistant was called upon to explain the meaning of Nicki Minaj's line He toss my salad like his name Romaine / And when we done, I make him buy me Balmain. "We must remember Balmain is a very old Parisian fashion house," Diemoz says. "But when it comes to success and democratization, you cannot control everything. The worst for us would be not to be quoted anywhere."

Considering it was only a few years ago that the CEO of Louis Roederer-the venerable French house that produces the champagne Cristal-appeared to dismiss rap music's audience as too lowbrow for its product, this is progress. Of course, getting his CEO to a place where he considers it a positive development when the label is mentioned in the same breath as ass-eating is also part of the reason Rousteing feels so old. "When I started out, I was Balmain's baby," he says. "To tell you the truth, now I think that Balmain is my baby."

"He said that?" Diemoz says. There's a long bit of silence. "Well, I suppose it is the truth. He has built his brand, and without him we would not be where we are today."

At the gym, Rousteing looks up at the sky, where the morning sun is just creeping through the clouds. "It's perfect for a selfie, actually," he observes. Holding the phone in front of his face, he adjusts his black Borsalino hat, props his hand on his chin, pouts his lips, and sucks in his cheeks. Click.

CREATING A BRAND is something that comes naturally to Rousteing, since it's something he's been doing his whole life. As the adopted only child of a white professional couple, he spent a lot of his time concocting origin stories for himself, ones that didn't involve being plucked from an orphanage at 4 months.

"When I was like 10 years old, I was the Prince of Egypt. When I was 15, I was the Prince of Brazil," he'd said the previous evening over a glass of Pinot Noir at Hôtel Costes, a Paris hotel that has itself been aspirationally swishy since the mid-'90s. With its curated house music and international clientele, it's a far cry from Bordeaux, where Rousteing grew up, a city that is "very conservative," he says, "and very, very French."

Rousteing appreciated the culture: The outfit that first piqued his interest in fashion, he says, was a Chanel jacket and matelassé bag. But he was obsessed with America, which he knew through pop music-Britney Spears, the Backstreet Boys, Michael Jackson. "I was like, 'How can you name someone the King of Pop?"" It impressed upon him the idea that America was a land of possibility. "You feel like

john varvatos DARK REBEL the new fragrance for men

Darkness doesn't hide...it reveals.

It leads us through the unknown.

And awakens our senses to
all we cannot see.

FROM DARKNESS COMES LIGHT



john varvatos DARK REBEL

Friends with Benefits

The brightest lights in the high-watt Rousteing crew—good for 152 million combined Instagram followers



Justin Bieber

Rousteing took his new pal as his date to this year's Met Gala an event the Beebs had never attended before.

Kendall Jenner

Earlier in the year, the two were spotted holding hands in Paris, leaving a threehour dinner. A low-key Rousteing Saturday.

Kim Kardashian

She doesn't always wear clothes, but when she does, they're frequently Olivier's, including the dress donned for her wedding reception.

Rihanna

Über-crush and muse who reminds him of Madonna, David Bowie, and Grace Kelly. "Rihanna could turn me straight," he's said.

Kanye West

Backstage photos show Kanye watching Olivier dress his nearly naked wife. So, yeah, these two are cool.

anything can happen," he says. "You have to show that you deserve it and that you are worth it, but they let you do it. In France, it's not so easy."

Rousteing worked hard, got good grades, and was encouraged by his parents to enroll in law school. "I like defending people," he explains. But after a month, he bagged it to study fashion at the École Supérieure des Arts et Techniques de la Mode in Paris. He didn't fare much better there. "I hated it," he says. His professors, he felt, were constantly trying to tamp down his ambition.

To the surprise of his family, he quit school and took off for Italy. "I wanted to change my life," he says. Soon he was doing grunt work at Roberto Cavalli in Florence, dancing in a nightclub to make ends meet. Five years in, after he had worked his way up to the "right hand" of then head designer Peter Dundas, he decided he was homesick for Paris. He sent his CV on impulse to Christophe Decarnin, the sensitive goth genius who had not so long ago helped pull Balmain from the brink of bankruptcy and then began peddling his hugely popular \$1,500 ripped jeans. Decarnin didn't talk much. ("Literally not at all," says Diemoz. "He was very deep in his art.") But he made up for it when he hired Rousteing, who, three weeks later, was in Paris, working as Decarnin's studio manager.

Despite his volubility, Rousteing is, like everyone else, circumspect on the details that led Decarnin to miss his winter 2011 show and prompted his subsequent disappearance from the industry. It was said he had a nervous breakdown,

and a spokesperson, quoted anonymously, claimed he was suffering from an ailment that was "not physical."

"Obviously it was really difficult," Rousteing says. "We were really close. I always believed in him, and obviously something amazing happened to me, but I didn't step on him to get where I am. It is thanks to him that I got what I have today."

There were a few other obvious candidates to replace Decarnin, but Balmain's top brass weren't interested in hiring a "fashion diva," according to a source inside the house. They wanted someone young and fresh. Their gaze fell on Rousteing, who had only been there a year but who had forged a reputation as an insatiable, eager worker who was also really fun to hang out with. "The market is in general greedy for new faces, which we perfectly know," says Diemoz. "The fact that he was not known was risky, but it was part of the game."

After the decision was announced, several longtime employees departed. "Some people left because they couldn't have any respect for me because I was younger. Some people stayed because they loved me and thought I was really talented," Rousteing says.

His first collection was inspired by Las Vegas, a place Rousteing had only ever seen in movies. "I think my youth helped," he says. "Like a kid, he's not afraid of the water if he doesn't know how to swim. He's just going to go in."

He based the next collection around a Fabergé egg he had seen at an auction of Elizabeth Taylor's belongings. For another, he took the office on a trip to Versailles. The reviews were solid. Rousteing was proving himself a worthy carrier of Balmain's bedazzled torch. But as time went on, he realized he wasn't especially *happy*. Two years ago, he paced nervously before his runway show in Paris—the collection was military-inspired, sure to be a crowdpleaser—when, he says, he was approached by Suzy Menkes, then fashion editor for the *International Herald Tribune*. Sensing his anxiety, she offered comfort. "She said, 'Just stay true to yourself, because when you are honest with yourself and you are happy, that's a success."

There are times in everyone's life when a simple platitude can blow you away, and for Rousteing this was one of those times. He looked at Menkes, pompadour bobbing as she walked away, and had a revelation. "I think I have been for long insecure," he says. "Because when I was a kid, I was trying to please my parents so much because I was scared to go back to orphanage. And in a way, I had always felt like I had to thank everybody for what's happened in my life.

"On this day I realized, You know what, I am going to believe in myself, whatever we are, whatever the reviews are. So I start to try to please less people and try to please myself some more. And that is, I think, something that comes with maturity, because I think that I am growing up."

From then on, he vowed to embrace who he was: a pop-star-worshipping, social-media-loving capital-M millennial. His next few collections were inspired not by long-forgotten times but by things from his own life, the streetwear of the '80s, the



• Introducing some racial variety to his shows isn't a statement, Rousteing says. Just common sense.

androgynous glamour of childhood idols like Michael Jackson. And he set about conscripting members of what he called "the newest and freshest generation, my generation, the generation of the future."

Core members of the "Balmain Army" include Kanye West, whom Rousteing met through Decarnin, and Kim Kardashian, who in turn introduced him to the rest of her family. "We all love him," says Kylie Jenner, who co-starred in a recent campaign. "He's so charming, he makes you feel like he's your friend." Rihanna felt the same way when she visited the atelier during her Diamonds World Tour and Instagrammed all the outfits Rousteing had picked out for her. #TheyOnlyPlayMyMusicInHere #HeCalledMeHisMUSE #IDiiiiiiieeeeddd, read the captions. "That was a moment, for Olivier, when everything switched," says Michail Papadogkonas, who identifies himself as the designer's "best friend" and whose V-neck reveals a "bros before hos" tattoo.

For one, Rousteing grasped the power of Instagram, and watching Kim Kardashian taught him a thing or two about how to exploit the medium. "We are in a world where everybody wants to see every step," Rousteing says. "The behind-the-scenes." At first, Balmain was not entirely on board with the photos he started posting on his own and the company's accounts, or the selfies he took, sometimes with celebrities, always with what became his trademark expression: cheeks sucked in, lips pouty, fierce Grace Jones gaze. "I said, 'Whoa, whoa, whoa. Where are we going with this?'" says Diemoz.

But as Balmain's followers and sales increased, the CEO came around. Sure, the vast majority of people on social media can't afford a \$3,000 poncho, but Balmain also sells shampoo, sunglasses, perfume. "By

sharing his life, he is feeding the market," Diemoz says.

Between Rousteing's Internet presence and "celebrity outreach," as one blog put it, the brand began picking up buzz. But the approval was not entirely universal. As the Kardashian Principle attests, popularity is accompanied by a corresponding amount of what even the French call "haters." Articles about Rousteing refer to his work as divisive or controversial, although they don't usually say why. Privately and online, people in the industry will say Rousteing comes across as a narcissist or that he is too awestruck by celebrities. Rousteing brushes this off. "In France we have this word, blasé, like it's cool to be bored," he says. "And I am not bored. I am ambitious. And maybe this makes them mad, because they forgot when they were sexy and young."

All designers hang out with celebrities, as one poster on a site for fashion obsessives noted: "He reminds me of Gianni Versace in the '90s and Jean Paul Gaultier when he was young and chilling with Madonna." For Rousteing's critics, the problem seems to be which celebrities he's chosen. "Balmain, the house of reality sex stars," reads one comment on a picture Rousteing posted of the Kardashians on Instagram. "Great house going downhill."

Rousteing's face tightens when I mention this. "Kim is so chic," he says. The comments that the pregnant Kardashian drew when she wore a Balmain dress to this year's Video Music Awards enraged him (example: "She looked like a baked potato"). "I don't know how you say in English, but in French you say anti-féministe," he says, growing more heated. "Should she stay home and wear black? Because she is proud of giving birth, she doesn't want to wear a caftan, she wants to be on the red carpet to be with her

husband and supporting him. What is more beautiful than that?"

That there is a racial element to the animus against the Kardashian-Wests seems undeniable. But for Rousteing the highprofile mixed-race family is inspiring. "It is to me like a modern fairy tale," he says. "When I was a kid, I was like, 'Where I can see this kind of couple?"

Rousteing's own heritage remains a bit of a mystery to him. "It was always too much for me," he tells me of his reluctance to learn more. "What if you find out your mother was raped, or a prostitute?" As a Person of Color, he's frequently called on to answer Big Questions about race in the fashion industry. His decision to cast Rihanna as the face of a 2014 collection wasn't a statement, he says. Nor is his habit of casting a diverse array of models-"a mixety," he calls it-in his shows and campaigns. It's just common sense. "I think it's sad," Rousteing says of people who would wonder about these choices. "They don't realize, you know, that life is different than the way it was before. The mainstream is changing."

Rousteing may have scrapped the lawyer career, but he's still found himself defending people, defending choices. If there's a common thread among the members of his Balmain Army, it's not race or youth, it's that they are people whom society has built up and also sort of diminishes. The Misunderstood Famous. The Crème de la Downtrodden. "My girls and my boys, they are like warriors," Rousteing boasts to me.

His latest recruit is reformed child pop star Justin Bieber, whom he took, dressed in a glittering Prince Charming jacket, as his date to the highbrow Met Gala this year, an event that despite Bieber's international stardom, he had never been to.

"Sometimes it's not only a matter of fighting *against* something, it's a matter of believing in someone," says Rousteing. Like a kid from Bordeaux who is tired of having to justify his existence.

"It's an honor to have you," André Leon Talley gushed on the red carpet.

"I'm really honored to have this guy support me," Bieber said, shrugging his gilded shoulders.

Back at his office, Rousteing takes a long look at himself in the full-length mirror he keeps by his desk. These days, he's pretty happy with what he sees, as he should be. "I don't feel insecure about anything anymore," he says. Balmain is doing well, and the company has doubled its revenue. His next show is coming up, and after that, a birthday party in Malibu. "I don't know where I come from," he says. But he knows who he is. "I am the prince of my own castle."

JESSICA PRESSLER profiled Adam Driver in the September 2014 issue of GQ.

Enough about us. Let's talk about you for a minute. There is the relaxed you (

There is the relaxed you (hopefully we'll be seeing that you a little more often).

There is the sporty you (the you who can dodge and weave and go go go). And then there is the intelligent, dependable, everyday you. This is the one who knows that all of you need their vehicle to be versatile, responsive and smart enough to adapt to whichever one of you is behind the wheel. Three driving modes that, all together, deliver the feeling of control, comfort and — wait for it — connection. It's just one (well, three actually) of the impressive innovations you'll find on the entirely new Lincoln MKX. LincolnMKX.com/Driving

THE FEELING STAYS WITH YOU.

Available features shown. Wheels available fall 2015





thing about planning a wedding in the 21st century: Women are free to throw off ye olde gender voke and declare. "Screw it-I don't give a crap." But GQ's ZACH BARON gives a crap. And now that he's getting married, he's the one choosing the flowers, planning the menu, and picking the flatware, and he can't stop wondering: How did I become the bride in this wedding? And

why does it

feel so good?

It's the best

preserving impulse came over me, and one golden night on a hotel balcony in Los Angeles, I got down on one knee and proposed to the woman

I love. A writer like me, but better-looking. She's matter-of-fact, funny,

IN THE EAST OF JAVA IN SEARCH OF CUBEB BERRIES





HUAWEI WATCH

SMART, REDEFINED

GETHUAWEI. COM/WATCH



PHOTO ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



strong—the kind of person you can trust to rescue you from your usual daily spiral of pettiness and self-loathing. Like I said: selfpreservation. I can remember every detail of the proposal—what I said, or attempted to say; what the light looked like all around and above her; the pink mini-bar champagne we drank together in a daze afterward.

What I can't remember is the moment, some weeks later, when I realized that I was the bride

Probably it was the rustic barn. The third rustic barn in 48 hours. The one owned and operated by a former beeper salesman from Virginia Beach. We were in a field, gazing at the old arbor he thought we might want to get married in front of. I had just learned what an arbor even was. (It's arch-y and wooden and you get married in front of it.) I was rapt. I could picture it, our wedding here, and in picturing it I wanted it. I turned to lock soulful eyes with my brideto-be, only to see my bride-to-be surreptitiously attempting to climb out the window of the man's Ford Expedition. Because that's the type of salesman he was-the type of salesman who locks you in his car while he pitches you. He was looking at her, in the gender-profiling way I would come to recognize, talking about her wedding and how it would go down, and she was looking back at him, her face a horrified, get-methe-fuck-out-of-here mixture of agony and antipathy. It was a look that said: Talk to my idiot fiancé. The bride.

Calling me the bride began as a joke between us. Her joke. I've since realized that she was trying to tell me something that I had yet to hear, which is that she had no intention of performing whatever role the woman is usually forced to perform in this situation. I get it. It's something I like about her and the way she goes through life-her skepticism, her independence, her distrust of authority. I think I'm marrying her precisely because she's the type of woman who's not super into weddings. She would get married at City Hall if she could. But she cannot. Because of me.

What does it mean, in practice, that I'm the bride? We've been working that out. Mostly it means I care. I care about table settings, family-style dinner service, centerpieces, the quality and shape of the shuttle bus that will be required to move our drunken friends and family from place to place. I will obsess, like I have obsessed over few things besides certain Future verses, over the guest list and our vows. Until a few months ago, I had no idea any of these things might matter to me. But they do. A lot. I like the decisions, the heightened stakes, the communal nature of it. I like trying to one-up other weddings I've been to. I'm competitive. I'm the bride.

Becoming the bride means, among other things, feeling solidarity with brides past. If your wife planned your wedding-even if it was decades ago-you owe your wife a diamond facial. Because she went to war for you. What a weird, passive-aggressive world I've found myself at home in. It's like a video game in which the bosses are all rictus-smiling caterers and maniacally itemizing venue operators and grim, pessimistic florists. You have to triumph over the hordes of people who tell you it's your special day and they're just there to give you what you want, followed by the long, disapproving pause when you tell them what you want. It's all so hoary. The color white. The very word *fiancé*, which is so brutal—the Wicker Man of words. The fact that until recently so many people were flat-out excluded from the institution. Women have had to put up with this for so long! For centuries oblivious straight men have been wandering around, acting like some succubus is about to entrap them in a sex-killing ritual conjured out of tulips and marzipan, doing absolutely nothing to help their besieged brides. Meanwhile women have been expected to wade through a polluted river of lacy garbage, trading fake joyful smile for fake joyful smile, making weighty aesthetic and emotional choices and having to pretend the entire time the experience is a dream come true.

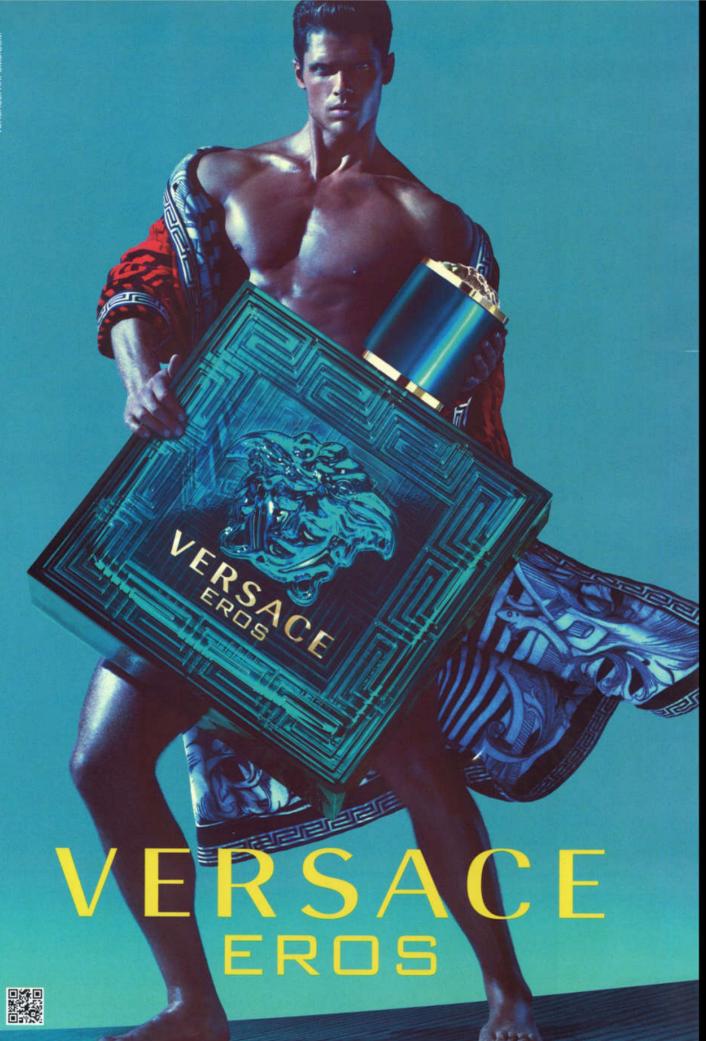
And yet...I like it. I feel like men have been missing out, honestly. The evolution of gender roles, in wedding planning as in all other things, has been great for women, sure. But it's also been great for us. I'm happy my future wife doesn't have to enter the wedding-planning terrordome it doesn't suit her. But I'm also happy to assume the role that's traditionally been assigned to her. There's a sort of joy in the ritual, I'm discovering. The weight of it, the commitment of it. I like how it forces all the people I love to hang out with me. I like thinking about the day: How she'll look. Our guests, drunk on alcohol I was annoyingly specific about choosing. The rustic barn, lit up by obnoxiously old-timey Edison bulbs, bright against the fading late-May light.

I've got this vision: Instead of the usual glum groupings of bridesmaids and groomsmen, we're surrounded by children. Our friends' kids. Boys on my side, girls on hers. They can cry, chase butterflies, I don't really care. The really tiny kids get a wagon. The ceremony ends and we process out all together, us and the little ones, while Young Jeezy plays. Everyone I've related this fantasy to looks at me like maybe I just huffed some paint. I don't care. Fuck you. It's my day. I'm the bride.

ZACH BARON is GQ'S staff writer.

Groomzilla's Advice for Taking **Charge of Your Big Day**

- TETINE WHO'S WHO As a bride, I can tell you it's not always obvious. Figuring out what your ideal role in this thing might be is second only to figuring out—and then respecting!—what her ideal role is.
- **TOTAL STATE OF THE PROPERTY O** certain romantic comedies would have you believe, there are a million different/valid ways to do this. Do you want to exchange vows while speargunning a shark in blissful, loving unison? You probably don't need a caterer for that one.
- **DEFINE ROLES** Moms. They want to help! Also sometimes they start quietly crying when you tell them what you actually want to do. Tell them they are valued. Tell them how they can help. And tell them what's none of their business.
- This is all just a lot of noise around an incredibly complicated emotional pact between two individuals. Figure out what you're signing up for before you pick out flowers. Everything after that is easy by comparison. - Z.B.



LIFT HERE TO EXPERIENCE VERSACE EROS

VERSACE PARFUMS

EXPERIENCE POUR HOMME





LIFT HERE TO EXPERIENCE MAN EAU FRAÎCHE

BELK, DILLARD'S AND NORDSTROM

@GQREPORT

f

EVENTS → PROMOTIONS → EXCLUSIVES



THE POLO: A LACOSTE ORIGINAL

What makes the original Polo iconic? *GQ* Editor-at-Large, Michael Hainey, and Scott Schuman, creator of **The Sartorialist**, sit down with style blogger Ryan Clark of **High Fashion Living**, to discuss the impact of the **LACOSTE** Polo and its transformation from a casual staple to a sophisticated style statement. Check out their video and shop the exclusive collection of *GQ*-approved iconic LACOSTE Polo looks at **gg.com/LACOSTE**.

Join the conversation and Instagram your LACOSTE Polo style, tagging @LACOSTE and #MYLACOSTEPOLO.



GREATER PALM SPRINGS PRIDE

The 29th Annual Greater Palm Springs Pride Festival takes place in the heart of downtown Palm Springs, along beautiful Palm Canyon Drive. Official Pride events begin on Friday, November 6, and continue through Sunday, November 8, with the parade beginning Sunday at 10:00 a.m. on Palm Canyon Drive at Tachevah.

For complete details on all events, visit **PSPride.org**.



ARE YOU A FOODIE?

Fine dining isn't always on fine china. From tablecloth to sandwich shop, **S.Pellegrino®** makes any meal an occasion with its fine bubbles and unique taste.

Show us what makes you a foodie at the Infinite Table. Visit us at sanpellegrino.com.

© 2015 Nestlé Waters North America Inc.





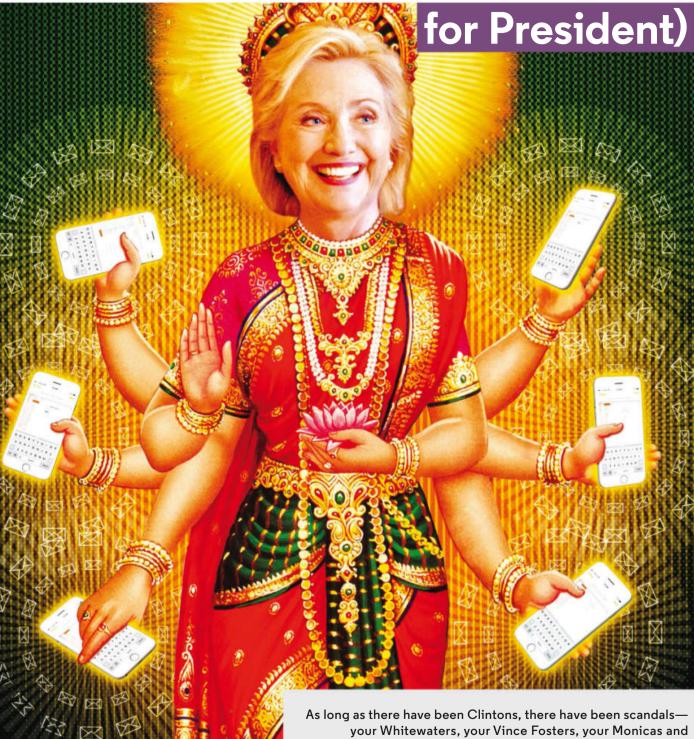


AUGUST 2015 | SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO ARTIST HOUSE

GQ and Isopure teamed up with mobile recording studio Jam in the Van and production team Lucey Stepp for this year's San Francisco Artist House at Lennon Studios. The weekend kicked off, when everyone took to the iconic Lennon Studios for a live music showcase, and refueled with Isopure. Over the next few days, guests relaxed with food and drinks while listening to live recording sessions performed by more than 20 one-of-a-kind bands from festival and local San Francisco acts.

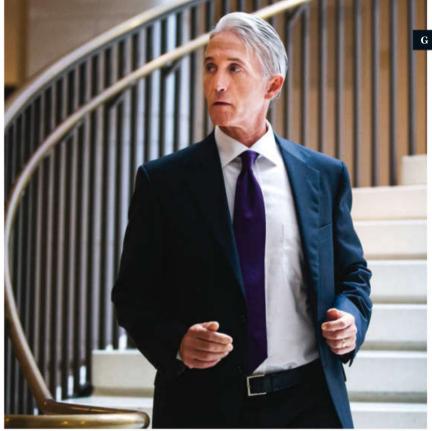
Could Beat Hillary (Isn't Running



As long as there have been Clintons, there have been scandals—
your Whitewaters, your Vince Fosters, your Monicas and
assorted dalliances—with each spectacle producing a new attack
dog who vows to vanquish the Clintons forever. Now, the man
who uncovered Hillary's sketchy e-mail scheme, Congressman
TREY GOWDY, could just become the most fearsome opponent
the Clintons have faced yet JASON ZENGERLE







• Most Clinton investigations end up like Representative Trey Gowdy's hair: unruly and all over the place.

WHEN TREY GOWDY set out to mow his backyard one May morning last year, he had, by his own admission, done little to distinguish himself during his short time in Washington. "I would not be on the list of what I believe to be the top 20 most effective members of Congress," he concedes. To the extent that the South Carolina Republican had earned any notoriety, it was for his golf handicap (a 1.7, he says, the lowest in the House) and for his bewildering haircut—an ever changing coiffure that has rotated between a faux-hawk, a slick-back, and a modified mullet.

Gowdy had no way of knowing it, but his fortunes were about to change—the hopes and fever dreams of those millions of Americans who have long despised Bill and Hillary Clinton would soon be vested in him. As he pushed his Toro, Gowdy's phone was ringing, with Speaker of the House John Boehner on the other end.

It had been, by then, nearly two years since the 2012 terrorist attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, but House Republicans still sniffed opportunity in the conspiracy theories swirling around then secretary of state Hillary Clinton's response to the assault. Four Americans had died, and conservatives figured that Clinton had been guilty of, at best, negligence or, at worst, a despicable cover-up. With a presidential campaign on the horizon, they glimpsed a perfect time to create a special committee to dig around on Benghazi—and by extension, Clinton.

And this is where Gowdy came in: Before he was a ho-hum congressman, he was a

spectacular lawyer, a crusading prosecutor with a specialty in long-unsolved murder cases. He'd be the perfect guy to clear up a Libyan cold case—and maybe lend a partisan crusade the sheen of professionalism and objectivity, too.

Gowdy finished up the backyard and noticed his missed call. When he rang his boss back, he heard the Speaker's familiar nicotine baritone: "Thinking about doing this committee thing. Don't say anything. I'll call you back later this afternoon."

The news raised a pressing question for Gowdy—a practical concern that wouldn't likely occur to anyone in his position. He wanted to know if he had time to finish mowing his lawn. "How soon will you call back?" he asked the Speaker. "I've still got to cut the front yard."

"Go cut the yard, son," Boehner replied.

Gowdy, who is 51, was told later that

afternoon that he'd be chairing the House Select Committee on Benghazi. And in the past 18 months he's quietly overseen fact-finding that's included interviews with nearly four dozen witnesses in private sessions, for a highly anticipated report the committee hopes to release early next year.

Of course, we don't have to wait for the report to know that Gowdy's committee has been plenty effective. No, not at confirming any Benghazi conspiracy theories—like that Clinton issued a "stand down" order that prevented a military response, or that the Libyan consulate was

being used for illegal arms shipments—but in discovering something that's already been perhaps more consequential.

Gowdy's investigators discovered, tucked among the 15,000 pages of documents that the State Department turned over to the committee, eight e-mail messages that contained something curious: a private address used by Clinton. This led to the realization in March that she had been using a private server installed in her home. The mystery of why she used the secret server—and the myriad GOP fantasies about what she kept hidden with it—has, of course, become a central story line in the early drama of the Clinton campaign. And it's ensured that Gowdy no longer suffers for lack of notoriety.

To his fellow Republicans, Gowdy has become an avenging angel and a rising star; to Democrats, he's now considered a villainous witch-hunter. "Boehner made a decision to launch a partisan investigation, and Gowdy's carrying that out," says David Brock, the author and former right-wing hit man who has become a staunch Clinton defender. These impressions will become even more polarized in late October, when Clinton testifies before Gowdy's committee, a rare public hearing that has all the makings of a Super Bowl for Hillary haters.

Will Gowdy meet the moment? "I was a mediocre lawyer for a long time," he told me one recent morning in South Carolina, "so what I lack in talent I make up for in experience." All politicians traffic in false modesty, but Gowdy, who speaks in a laidback southern frat-boy twang, is so good at it, he actually seems humble. Of course, it's not humility as much as cunning he flashes when he points out that he's not trying to derail Clinton. "I do not view it as my job to 'Stop Secretary Clinton," he says.

Never mind that at two o'clock that morning he was wide awake refining the six-page list of questions he planned to put to her in a few weeks. No, Gowdy insists that he doesn't have it in for Hillary. "I literally did not

"I would not take the briefing from the FBI if it came with Victoria's Secret models," Gowdy says. "Because if there was a leak, I don't want anybody to say it's me."

mention her name the first three hearings we had," he told me, explaining that upending Clinton's campaign isn't the chore he signed up for. That is "the job of fill-in-the-blank: Reince Priebus or whoever the nominee is. That's not my job."

Statements like that are exactly what make Gowdy so effective as a potential Clinton slayer. By being so insistent and persuasive that his committee's work is legitimate and free of partisan intent, he's made it more likely that the GOP can achieve a partisan outcome. In other words, more than any other Republican who has taken on the duty of stopping the Clintons, Gowdy appears to be the closest to succeeding at it.

IF HILLARY CLINTON doesn't end up in the Oval Office, it will be because somebody else—Jeb? Joe? Trump?!—wins at the polls. But make no mistake: That victory will be owed in large part to Gowdy, who has already thrown her off course.

By this point on the calendar, after all, she had planned to be well on her way to securing the Democratic nomination—not preparing to troop up to Capitol Hill, yet again, to answer questions, yet again, about yet another Clinton scandal.

But when you put it that way, the most surprising aspect of the whole e-mail imbroglio isn't that Clinton's soft glide to the White House has now been interrupted, but rather that we ever bought into the delusion that a coronation would be simple for her. For 25 years now, the Republicans have used every opportunity to attack, investigate, and otherwise foil the march of the Clintons. And for those same 25 years, Bill and Hillary have invariably aided these efforts by supplying grist for the GOP scandal mill.

In the case of the e-mail scandal, Clinton haters now have something that perfectly conforms to the long-running narrative of deviousness they've pushed: that the Clintons are secretive, calculating, and forever breaking the rules. Hillary's own hamfisted attempts to explain matters—she's tried being defensive, she's tried laughing it all off, she's even tried a kind of grudging apology—haven't helped. But then, history tells us that Clinton responses rarely help contain the whiff of scandal.

The saving grace for them has always been that despite the Clintons' own screwups, their Republican inquisitors have inevitably comported themselves worse. Time and again, it's looked as if the Clintons have been backed into a corner, only to slip away when their foes overreached. But Gowdy, so far at least, has managed to avoid this. For one thing, he's

To bone up for October's showdown, Gowdy has been watching videos of Clinton's appearances before Congress, scouting her strengths and weaknesses.



· Until recently, Gowdy says, he was a congressional nobody. His war with Clinton is making him a star.

tended to steer clear of the spotlight—proving to be the rare congressman who doesn't jump at the chance to wield a gavel on TV by holding public hearings. Most of the select committee's work has been conducted in private. Clinton's testimony will be only its fourth public hearing. The previous three were total snoozes. "My goal," Gowdy told me, "is not to be exciting."

Gowdy's also shown restraint, and a bit of humanity, where others might not have. When he discovered that a key potential witness, a former CIA officer named Tyler Drumheller, who was sending private intelligence about Libya to Clinton through their mutual friend Sidney Blumenthal, had been diagnosed with terminal cancer, he did not call Drumheller in for questioning. "It's just really hard for me to say, 'I want you to take one of the last days you have and do this,' "Gowdy explained to me. Drumheller's "time was probably better spent around people that he loved and that loved him."

Most of all—and most vexing to Clinton—Gowdy has managed to avoid the mission creep that has hobbled so many of the past efforts to bring her and her husband down. He's refrained from indulging in the conspiracy theories about Hillary and Benghazi and hasn't been nearly as aggressive as others might have been about the e-mail sys-

tem the committee helped to uncover. Gowdy says he's only after correspondence related to Benghazi and has no interest in whether, for instance, Clinton's other e-mails contained classified information. "If you may find facts that are interesting and relevant that are outside the jurisdiction, you've

got two options: You can go back and enlarge it to include that, or you can say, 'Well, that's for somebody else to determine,'" Gowdy says. "My jurisdiction has not been enlarged, and I don't want it enlarged."

The clever result has been that certain matters beyond Gowdy's carefully policed purview have fallen into the laps of investigators who are less easily dismissed as partisan witch-hunters. For instance, the intelligence agencies' inspector general, not Gowdy, investigated whether Clinton improperly sent and received classified e-mail; and it's the FBI, not Gowdy, that is reportedly investigating the security of Clinton's private e-mail server. I say "reportedly" because even Gowdy claims not to know what, exactly, the FBI is looking into. And he says the less he knows, the better. "I would not take the briefing from the FBI if it came with Victoria's Secret models," Gowdy told me. "I don't want to know, because if there was a leak, I don't want anybody to say it's me."

Yet despite his professed aversion to seeing information trickle out inappropriately, plenty of it has. That's why Gowdy's Democratic critics—and some journalists, too—believe that the committee has leaked like a sieve, pointing to a series of media reports that they say could only have come from Gowdy or the six other Republicans on the 12-member committee. Like the New York Times story back in March that first broke the news about Clinton's private e-mail address. Or the more recent story revealing that the former Clinton staffer who set up the e-mail system had told the committee he'd plead the Fifth.

Democrats say Gowdy has no interest in an impartial investigation—they note that despite all the leaks, testimony that makes Clinton look good never seems to get released. "I think Trey says a lot of the right things and certainly doesn't engage in the kind of hyperbole of some of the others that have gone before him," Adam Schiff, a California congressman and a Democratic member of the Benghazi committee, told me. "But he is acting in an equally partisan way. Tragically, it's become a committee with very little focus on Benghazi and instead is obsessed with attempting to derail Secretary Clinton's campaign."

Gowdy affects a sorrowful, almost wounded tone when pondering these complaints and refuses to return fire lest he undermine his claims of bipartisanship. He calmly denies the charges of leaking. And yet he doesn't sound too chagrined that reporters have gotten their hands on certain information—or that the media have amplified and legitimized claims that would seem partisan if he shared them. "Nothing advances things like a media story does," Gowdy told me. "A Republican congressman from South Carolina saying X really doesn't garner that much attention."

ON THE DESK IN Gowdy's office on Capitol Hill, he keeps pictures of the four Americans killed in the Benghazi attacks, including the U.S. ambassador to Libya, Christopher Stevens. Just as when he was a prosecutor, he wants to do right by the dead and their families. "I never expected to be doing homicide cases in Congress," he says. "Maybe because I did do homicide cases and I am so well acquainted with the finality of death, having met with the family members of the four, that is enough for me. And when I meet with them again, I can say, 'This is what I found out that you didn't know previously.' That is all the success I need."

And the families seem to appreciate it. "Get answers, please!" Patricia Smith, whose 34-year-old son was killed in the attack, has publicly beseeched Gowdy—making it that much tougher a sales job for Clinton's defenders to portray the South Carolina congressman as some sort of Inspector Javert.

To bone up for his showdown with Clinton, the old prosecutor has lately been watching videos of her past appearances before Congress, scouting her strengths and weaknesses. This time around, her vaunted skill at running out the five minutes allotted to a congressman's question will be useless; Clinton has promised to testify for as long as it takes to answer all of the committee's questions. "How many times have you seen members of Congress interrupt her, the optics of which don't look good, and say, 'Okay, well, I have to move on'?" Gowdy asks. "Well, why do you have to move on? Because there's an artificial barrier at the end of your received time. We don't have that."

For her part, Clinton's team is dispensing with the usual game of lowering expectations. Campaign officials have been privately boasting about the "war room" from which they'll direct spin during and after the hearings. Some supporters even predict that Hillary will use the hearings to her advantage over her Republican tormentors. "I expect she'll run circles around them," Brock says. But even if Clinton succeeds in quieting the e-mail questions—at Gowdy's hearing or elsewhere this fall—the e-mail scandal has inflicted damage that won't be undone. That's because Gowdy and his investigation have already changed the terms on which Clinton's presidential campaign will be run.

Gone forever are those heady days, just after Clinton jumped in the race, when she pledged to run as an optimistic trailblazer. Thanks to Gowdy—and a summer spent bogged down in talk of testimony and leaks and secret servers—we know voters won't get that kind of campaign. Not out of the Republicans and not out of Clinton. If Hillary Clinton wants to win the White House, she'll now have to win ugly, in that grinding, divisive, and soul-crushing way that the Clintons have always won.

And in that sense, Gowdy has won, too. Although he swears up and down he has no ambition for higher office, he can't help but notice his newfound notoriety. Thanks to his reputation as a potential Hillary slayer, he's already a popular draw on the GOP fund-raising circuit—traveling all over the country to rake in the bucks for his fellow Republicans.

He even gets stopped on the street. Gowdy recalls a recent encounter at the Charlotte airport as he and a fellow South Carolina Republican congressman, Mick Mulvaney, were making their way home. "This guy comes up and says, 'I'm a big fan,'" Gowdy tells me. "I say, 'Well, thank you. Let me introduce you to your congressman. This is Mick Mulvaney.' He goes, 'I don't care anything about Mick Mulvaney.' I say, 'Well, here he is, right here with me.' And he says, 'Well, hey, Mick, will you take a picture of me and Congressman Gowdy?'"

As he recounted the tale, Gowdy beamed. Getting recognized as the guy who could vanquish a Clinton sure beats being known as the guy with the haircut.

 ${\tt JASON\ ZENGERLE}\ is\ {\tt GQ's\ political}\ correspondent.$

It Takes a Village Idiot

With enemies like these, no wonder the Clintons have never been beat



Gary Aldrich 1996

The cranky FBI agent spills wacky White House "secrets" in Unlimited Access.

How'd That Work Out?

Backlash to his wild claims (Bill snuck out of the White House for secret trysts!) and old-man gripes (staffers chewed gum!) forces Aldrich to fess up to exaggeration.

Dan Burton 1994–1998

Certain the Clintons were behind the supposed murder of Vince Foster, the congressman launches probe.

How'd That Work Out?

Burton stages bizarre pistol experiment in backyard to bolster cockamamy forensics theory. He's unsuccessful but undeterred! "This guy's a scumbag," he says of Bill. "That's why I'm after him."

Ken Starr 1994-1997

Appointed to investigate a failed real estate deal from 1978, Starr prods all corners of the Clintons' lives, eventually covering the Lewinsky affair.

How'd That Work Out?

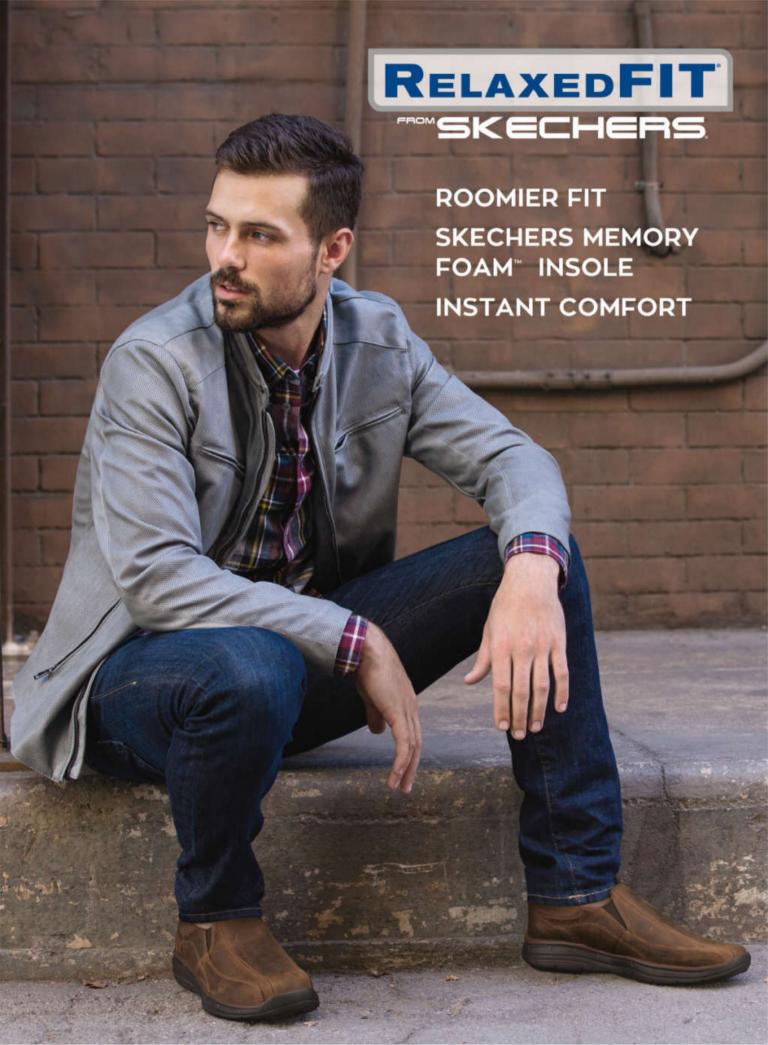
work Out? Bill hangs on to the White House, and poll numbers soar amid disgust at GOP overreach. Starr admits to regretting his role in the whole sordid thing.

William Dannemeyer 1994

Former California congressman links Clintons to dozens of supposedly suspicious deaths; calls for hearings.

How'd That Work Out?

Sane people point out that the Clintons barely know many of those they supposedly ordered killed... and have way bigger enemies somehow left unscathed.





Get High and

After too many years spending our precious winter getaways stuck in peak-season beach traffic, we're moving our vacations onto a different sort of sand. We're heading SOUTHWEST, to wide-open spaces with red rocks and green chiles and purple skies, where the sun's always shining and dune buggies are legitimate means of transportation. Come on out and join us, because the desert has never been hotter

GQ's Guide to the Great Desert Vacation







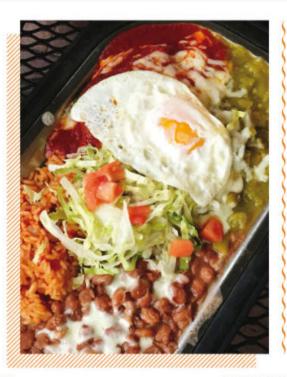


* Have you ever considered camping and then thought, "Yeah, I might do that, but only if my tent had room for a king-size bed, a wood-burning stove, a set of cooling misters, and a full private bathroom with running water"? The haute hippies at Moab Under Canvas have anticipated your needs with a luxury campsite that's more like a tented hotel. Best of all, it's right on the doorstep of Arches National Park, a mind-blowing red-rock playground for hiking, biking, climbing, and ballooning. Even if you don't do any of that stuff, it's worth the trip simply to sit on the deck of your tent after a hard day in the sun, drinking a canned Moab Brewery IPA from down the road and watching comets stream across the desert sky.



Burn After Eating:

Scarf Your Way Through the Green-Chile Corridor





ALBUQUERQUE Breakfast

When the Frontier Restaurant flings open its doors at 5 a.m., follow the hordes of still-drunk University of New Mexico students to this standby across the street from campus. Ogle the portraits of John Wayne, then order the breakfast burrito with green chile and carne adovada, plus a legendary sweet roll for the road.

SANTA FE Lunch

An hour's drive up the interstate, you'll find the rehabbed redbrick train station housing Tomasita's. While you may be tempted by the excellently named Randy Travis Plate (a pair of grilled pork chops with refried beans, smothered in green chile), the classic order is enchiladas topped with green chile and an egg.

TAOS Dinner and Drinks

Prepare for a tough call at Orlando's:
The deep-fried chiles rellenos, or the green chile served with Frito pie? After you eat your decision, head for a nightcap just two miles away at Eske's Brew Pub & Eatery, and order up (what else?) a pint of Eske's Green Chile Beer, made with homegrown New Mexico peppers.





Introducing Stouffer's* Fit Kitchen. Six hearty, satisfying meals with over 25 grams of protein, perfect for a balanced lifestyle. Try one today.







Take Photography Lessons from the Legend Who Snapped This Picture



⇒ Anton Corbijn and U2 spent three days roaming the California desert near Death Valley for the photo session behind 1987's masterpiece The Joshua Tree. No matter which photogenic sands you're visiting, follow Corbijn's tips for coming home with your own memento.

▼ BE SPONTANEOUS



"The rarity of finding a single Joshua tree is cause for celebration, because they tend to grow in groups,"

Corbijn says. "So when I saw this tree, I stopped the bus, and we went out to take these pictures. The U2 record was never called The Joshua Tree until I took that photograph.'

▼ SLOW YOUR ROLL



"I like to shoot right after the sun sets. The light makes the ordinary look extraordinary, though it doesn't last long and

you'll need to slow down your shutter speed. My normal setting is 1/60 second, so I'll go down to 1/5 or 1/8 second. A heavy camera helps, as it doesn't take on the natural shaking of your body.'

▼ GO ANALOG



'Film is much nicer, because you may only have 12 exposures and you're much more careful as you shoot.

And you don't know what you have shot until you come back and develop it. It's a nice kind of tension. One of the reasons I don't shoot digital is exactly that: Film is a bit of an adventure.'



Where Stylish Lodging Is in the House



* Way out in the tumbleweeds of Far West Texas, the town of Marfa has long been a haven for big-city artists who want to get off the grid—and that includes the husband-and-wife team of Jamey and Constance Garza, two furniture designers who moved to town from Los Angeles in 2003. Recently they've started designing guesthouses: La Mistica (pictured), The Love House, and Rock City House. Rentable via Airbnb or VRBO, all three share a refined southwestern aesthetic that's equal parts Steven Alan and Gram Parsons. La Mistica has vaulted steel-and-pecan ceilings, a barbecue out back, and a rain shower. The airy other two (which are walking distance from downtown and can be rented as a compound) are practically begging to host a Shiner Bock kegger. Any way you go, you'll have a high-caliber crash pad when you drop into town to see the minimalist Donald Judd installations, the phantasmagoric Marfa Lights, or the singular Museum of Electronic Wonders & Late Night Grilled Cheese Parlour.



BRAUN Series 9

NEW

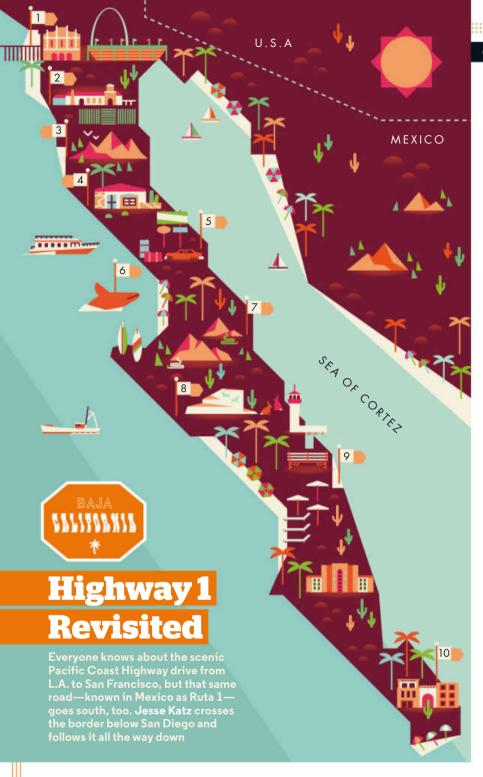
Introducing the
World's Best Shaver
in efficiency and skin comfort*



The New Braun Series 9 gives you unparalleled efficiency through SynchroSonic™ technology. The Series 9 has four cutting elements on its fully flexible head that provides maximum comfort and facial adaptability for the ultimate close shave.

Learn more about Series 9 at Braun.com





- 1. Tijuana has long beckoned Americans seeking the forbidden. Wedged against the U.S. border fence, the Plaza Monumental showcases what may be the final taboo: bullfighting. A Sunday corrida is tawdry, disquieting, and on occasion majestic.
- 2. You will drink beer in Baja, but don't skip the Ruta del Vino, Ensenada's burgeoning wine country. The Barbera at eco-vineyard Alximia tastes of warm, minerally earth.
- **3.** High in the peninsula's interior, where the Sierra de San Pedro Mártir National Park reaches 9,000 feet, the California condor has returned. Twenty-eight now soar above the pines, their nine-foot wingspans the greatest of any North American bird.
- **4. Mama Espinoza's** restaurant in El Rosario has been feeding dusty Baja 1000 dirt-bike racers for decades. You'll want what they're having: lobster burrito, *por favor*.
- **5.** After hugging the Pacific for hours, Highway 1 veers inland to a cactus-spiked moonscape. The only gas station in **Cataviña** was shuttered long ago, so you'll have to fill up at one of the village's makeshift vendors, their pumps little more than barrel and hose.
- **6.** Winter in Baja is whale season, an ancient mammalian spectacle. The grays populating the Ojo de Liebre lagoon become so plentiful—and playful—you can approach with a licensed skipper and pet the largest creatures on earth.





* When you haven't left the craps table in 12 hours, it's easy to forget that Vegas is surrounded by the Mojave. We say: Get off the Strip for a change, grab a helmet and goggles, and strap yourself into a dune buggy for a fishtailing chase through the dunes. With the throaty engine chopping directly behind your head (and Mad Max racing through your mind), you'll spray sand in the switchbacks and hurtle yourself over the accurately named 85-foot drop known as the Devil's Staircase. Got gambling withdrawal? Once you park your buggy, there's a free shuttle straight back to your table. From \$199, sunbuggy.com.

- 7. Cuesta del Infierno (Hell's Hill) is one of countless steep, snaky tests of skill and nerve, but this white-knuckle mountain pass comes with a reward: your first glimpse of the Sea of Cortez, where desert succumbs to gulf.
- **8.** The original hunter-gatherers of Baja's rugged middle have vanished, but their art lives on. The **Sierra de San Francisco**, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is home to hundreds of cave paintings—deer, rabbits, sheep, turtles—at least 5,000 years old.
- **9.** Everyone in La Paz seems to be strolling the lively bayside boardwalk. Find a wroughtiron bench and plunge into Steinbeck's Log from the Sea of Cortez, his account of exploring these waters in a sardine boat.
- 10. Funny how, at its farthest point, Baja is most geared for Americans. And after 1,000 miles of road, why deny yourself some indulgences? Casa Natalia Hotel, a boutique San José del Cabo hideaway co-owned by a French surferchef, awaits with poolside margaritas.



THE GENTLEMEN'S FUND



GQ honors 2015 ambassador

IAN SOMERHALDER

for his work with

THE IAN SOMERHALDER FOUNDATION

From vampire to crash survivor, and from the highest-rated TV shows to the big screen, Ian Somerhalder's work has crossed so many genres, it's as though he's trying to pull us all together into a pangea of viewers—one big audience.

As an activist and advocate, Ian has also kept the scope wide. He cleaned off oil-covered wildlife following the Deepwater Horizon drilling disaster. He has supported animal shelters and spoken out against factory farming. So in 2010, Ian formed the Ian Somerhalder Foundation, not to focus on one particular effort, but to address the many interrelated challenges we face. Its philosophy is that recycling, animal adoption, lowering carbon emissionsthey're all ways of healing the earth. The Foundation delivers programs, distributes funds, and forges partnerships to work toward a healthier planet.

Not surprisingly, one of Ian's projects is the greening of the entertainment industry—because it's not about separating your job and your cause. For Ian, we're all one audience and we're all one world.

Get involved at

ISFOUNDATION.COM





⇒ In this part of Californiawhere you can't swing a kettlebell without hitting a juice bar or Betty Ford Centereveryone is obsessed with toning and purifying the human body. Which makes it a great place for beating yourself up with exercise and then healing with feel-good treatments. Pretty much every element native to the area can

be used for both.

ELEMENT

PAIN

PLEASURE

Dry off and head over

Spa for an antioxidant

to the Spring Resort and



After getting all sweaty on the tennis courts (or, um, playing croquet), swim laps in the saltwater pool at the Parker Palm Springs hotel.

salt scrub and hour-long Swedish massage.

STONES

Scramble over stones while hiking almost 8,000 vertical feet to the summit of the famed Cactus to Clouds trail.

Take the tram back down the mountain and order up a Desert Stone Massage (featuring "warm desert basalt stones") at the Spa Esmeralda in Indian Wells.

GOLF

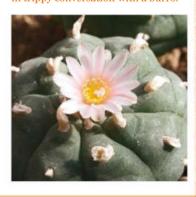


Try to birdie just one damned hole at the picturesque Mountain Course, nestled in the Santa Rosa Mountains. Work out the knots in your back at the Avalon Hotel spa with a Quiro-Golf massage, in which "golf balls become an extension of the therapists' hands in order to reach deeper areas of the muscle.'



This Town Puts the "High" in High Desert

* If your idea of relaxation involves a psychedelic vision quest, first memorize the Spanish phrase Llévame a encontrar la medicina, which translates to "Take me to find the medicine." Then make your way to Real, a tapped-out silver-mining town in the Estación Catorce desert that has built an entire tourist economy around peyote. Hire a guide, say the magic words, and soon you'll be out in the thorny scrub, searching for buttons of the hallucinogenic cactus. It's like a pick-vour-own-berries farm, except you've gotta keep one eye out for the federales. And after a successful expedition, you might wind up deep in trippy conversation with a burro.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF THE PARKER PALM SPRINGS; DREW ROBINSON; SUSAN E. DEGGINGER/IMAGEBRIEF; COURTESY OF LA QUINTA RESORT & CLUB

Saving People Money Since 1936

... that's before there were battery operated razors.

GEICO has been serving up great car insurance and fantastic customer service for more than 75 years. Get a quote and see how much you could save today.

geico.com | 1-800-947-AUTO | local office





WEREN'T WE TOLD THEY DON'T MAKE POP STARS THIS BIG ANYMORE? NOBODY BOTHERED TO TELL TAYLOR SWIFT. CHUCK KLOSTERMAN INTERROGATES THE MOST POPULAR HUMAN ALIVE PHOTO-GRAPHS BY MICHAEL THOMPSON



"THAT'S A PAP," she says as we leave the restaurant, pointing toward an anonymous gray car that looks like the floor model in an auto dealership specializing in anonymous gray cars. Her security detail suggests that it's probably not a paparazzo because there's no way a paparazzo could find us at such an unglamorous, unassuming establishment. But as with seemingly every other

inference she has ever made, Taylor Swift is ultimately proven right. The guy in the gray car is taking her picture. This annoys her, but just barely.

It's August in Southern California. We crawl into the back of a massive Toyota and start driving to Swift's West Coast residence, located in a rural enclave of Beverly Hills. The gray car trails us through Franklin Canyon. Swift whips out her phone and starts showing me images from the video shoot for "Wildest Dreams," including a clip of a giraffe licking her face. She has more photos on her phone than any person I've ever met. "I wanted this video to be about the making of a 1950s movie being filmed on location in Africa," she explains. Swift came up with the concept after reading a book by Ava Gardner and Peter Evans, The Secret Conversations. Her premise for the video (co-starring Clint Eastwood's son) is that-since social media did not exist in the '50s-it would be impossible for actors not to fall in love if they were isolated together in Africa, since there would be no one else to talk to.

We chat a little about Ryan Adams and a little about books. Swift mentions that she wrote a non-autobiographical novel when she was 14, titled A Girl Named Girl, and that her parents still have it. I ask her what it was about, assuming she will laugh. But her memory of the plot is remarkably detailed. (It's about a mother who wants a son but instead has a girl.) If she released it today, it would immediately be the best-selling YA novel in the nation. When she was about that same age, Swift's family moved from Pennsylvania to Nashville, to jump-start her music career. I ask what she imagines might have happened if they'd never moved and if she'd never become an artist. "I would still be involved with music in my spare time," she says. "But I would have gone to college, and I would probably be involved with a form of business where words and ideas are at the forefront. Such as marketing." She returns to her phone and starts scrolling for an old voice memo she sent to Jack Antonoff of the band Bleachers while they were co-writing songs for 1989. Antonoff's nickname for Swift is Dead Tooth, a reference to a minor dental mishap. Just as she tells me this, her cell phone rings. The display panel says the incoming call is from J TIMB. "Oh, my God. Justin Timberlake?" Her surprise does not seem artificial. "Can I take this?"

She takes the call. The volume on her phone is loud enough for me to intermittently hear both sides of the conversation. Swift explains that she's driving to her house, but that she can't actually stay there because contractors are renovating almost every room. "Have you ever seen the movie *The Money Pit?*" asks Timberlake. She has not, so Timberlake provides a capsule review. He has a 4-month-old baby at home and is constantly tired, yet he can't fall sleep. He asks Swift for advice on sleeping. Swift tells the driver to pull over to the shoulder of the road, since she keeps losing reception as we drive through the



canyon. The paparazzo in the gray car casually passes, having not-socasually followed us for at least five miles.

The conversation lasts almost 15 minutes (which is a little weird, since I'm just sitting there beside her, openly taking notes). "You're never going to get old," Swift assures Timberlake. "That's scientific fact. That's medical." Even her sarcasm is aspirational. Eventually JT tells her the reason he's calling is because he wants to perform the song "Mirrors" with her on the last night of her upcoming five-date stand at Staples Center. (Late in every concert, Swift brings a surprise guest onstage.) She reacts to this news the way a teenage girl in Nebraska would react if suddenly informed that a paternity test had revealed Taylor Swift was her biological sister.

When she ends the call, Swift looks at me and says, "This is so crazy. This is so crazy." She repeats that phrase four times, each time with ascending volume.

Now, inside my skull, I am thinking one thought: This is not remotely crazy. It actually seems like the opposite of crazy. Why wouldn't Justin Timberlake want to perform with the biggest entertainer in America, to an audience of 15,000 people who will lose their collective mind the moment he appears? I'd have been much more surprised if he'd called to turn her down. But then I remember that Swift is 25 years old, and that her entire ethos is based on experiencing (and interpreting) how her insane life would feel if she were exactly like the type of person who'd buy a ticket to this particular concert. She has more perspective than I do. Every extension of who she is and how she works is (indeed) "so crazy," and what's even crazier is my inability to recognize just how crazy it is.

So Taylor Swift is right again.

IF YOU DON'T TAKE SWIFT SERIOUSLY, you don't take contemporary music seriously. With the (arguable) exceptions of Kanye West and Beyoncé Knowles, she is the most significant pop artist of the modern age. The scale of her commercial supremacy defies parallel she's sold 1 million albums in a week three times, during an era when most major artists are thrilled to move 500,000 albums in a year. If a record as comparatively dominant as 1989 had actually existed in the year 1989, it would have surpassed the sales of Thriller. There is no demographic she does not tap into, which is obviously rare. But what's even more atypical is how that ubiquity is critically received. Swift gets excellent reviews, particularly from the most significant arbiters of taste. (A 2011 New Yorker piece conceded that Swift's reviews are "almost uniformly positive.") She has never gratuitously sexualized her image and seems pathologically averse to controversy. There's simply no antecedent for this kind of career: a cross-genre, vouth-oriented, critically acclaimed colossus based entirely on the intuitive songwriting merits of a single female artist. It's as if midperiod Garth Brooks was also early Liz Phair, minus the hat and the swearing. As a phenomenon, it's absolutely new.

And this, somewhat predictably, creates a new set of problems.

Even within the most high-minded considerations of Swift's music, there is inevitably some analysis (or speculation) about her personal life. She's an utterly credible musician who is consumed as a tabloid personality. Very often (and not without justification), that binary is attributed to ingrained biases against female performers. But it's more complicated than that. Swift writes about her life so directly that the listener is forced to think about her persona in order to fully appreciate what she's doing creatively. This is her greatest power: an ability to combine her art and her life so profoundly that both spheres become more interesting to everyone, regardless of their emotional investment in either.

Swift clearly knows this is happening. But she can't directly admit it, because it's the kind of thing that only works when it seems accidental. She's careful how she describes the process, because you don't become who she is by describing things carelessly.

Even the most serious critics inevitably discuss the more tabloid aspects of your life. Is this valid? Does the fact that you write about yourself in such a confessional style require intelligent people to look at your music through that lens?

I don't feel there is any injustice when people expand beyond my music and speculate on who certain songs might be about. I've never named names, so I feel like I still have a sense of power over what people say—even if that *isn't* true, and even if I don't have any power over what people say about me. The fact that I've never confirmed who those songs are about makes me feel like there is still one card I'm holding. So if you're going to look at your life and say, "I get to play sold-out football stadiums all over the world. I get to call up my favorite artists and ask them to perform with me, and most of the time they say yes. I get to be on the cover of this magazine"—this is all because I write songs about my own life. So I would feel a little strange complaining about how it's covered.

But I'm not asking if it's fair or unfair, or if the downside is worth the upside. I'm asking from an aesthetic perspective: Is thinking about your real life an essential part of appreciating your music? Could your music be enjoyed the same way in a vacuum, even if no one knew anything else about you? "Shake It Off" is one of my most successful songs, and that has nothing directly, intricately, pointedly personal in it. No one really says I stay out too late. I just thought it sounded good.

Have you ever stopped yourself from writing a fictional lyric because you feared it would be incorrectly applied to your nonfictional life? No. Some of the things I write about on a song like "Blank Space" are satire. You take your creative license and create things that are larger than life. You can write things like *I get drunk on jealousy but you'll come back each time you leave, 'cause darling I'm a night-mare dressed like a daydream.* That is not my approach to relationships. But is it cool to write the narrative of a girl who's crazy but seductive but glamorous but nuts but manipulative? That was the character I felt the media had written for me, and for a long time I felt hurt by it. I took it personally. But as time went by, I realized it was kind of hilarious.

It's impossible for an artist to control how she is perceived. But an artist can anticipate those perceptions, which is almost as good. "A nuanced sense of humor does not translate on a general scale," Swift says, "and I knew that going in. I knew some people would hear 'Blank Space' and say, *See, we were right about her.* And at that point, I just figure if you don't get the joke, you don't deserve to get the joke."

THERE'S A LONG TRADITION of musicians expressing (or pretending to express) a degree of disinterest in how they are metabolized by the culture. They claim to ignore their own reviews while feigning a lack of discernment about what their audience wants or expects, since these are things that cannot be manipulated. Swift is not like this. She has an extrinsic focus that informs her creative process. From her perspective, not tracking how people view your work feels stranger than the alternative.

"I went through a few years where I just never went online and never looked at blogs," she recalls. "This was around 2013, when the only thing anyone wanted to write about me was about me and some guy. It was really damaging. You're thinking, 'Everybody goes on dates when they're 22. It's fine, right?' Nope. Not when you're in this situation, and everything you do is blown out of proportion and expanded upon. And all of a sudden, there's an overriding opinion that doesn't accurately reflect how you actually live your life. So I didn't go online for a year and a half. I actually forgot my Instagram password. But now I check in and see what's happening. In 2015, that

TO ME, THE SAFEST THING I COULD DO WAS TAKE THE BIGGEST RISK. I KNOW HOW TO WRITE A SONG. I'M NOT CONFIDENT ABOUT A LOT OF OTHER ASPECTS OF MY LIFE, BUT I KNOW HOW TO WRITE A SONG."

stuff does matter. Because if enough people say the same thing about me, it becomes fact in the general public's mind. So I monitor what people say about me, and if I see a theme, I know what that means. I've had it happen twice before. In 2010, it was *She's too young to get all these awards. Look how annoying she is when she wins. Is she even good?* And then in 2013, it was *She just writes songs about guys to get revenge. She's boy-crazy. She's a problematic person.* It will probably be something else again this year."

How you view this level of consciousness is proportional to how you feel about Swift as a public figure. There is a perpetual sense that nothing about her career is accidental and that nothing about her life is unmediated. These are not unusual thoughts to have about young mainstream stars. But what's different with Swift is her autonomy. There is no Svengali directing her career; there is no stage mother pushing her toward the spotlight. She is in total control of her own constructed reality. If there was a machine that built humans out of positive millennial stereotypes, Swift would be its utopian creation.

"I used to watch *Behind the Music* every day," she says. (Her favorite episode was the one about the Bangles.) "When other kids were watching normal shows, I'd watch *Behind the Music*. And I would see these bands that were doing so well, and I'd wonder what went wrong. I thought about this a lot. And what I established in my brain was that a lack of self-awareness was always the downfall. That was always the catalyst for the loss of relevance and the loss of ambition and the loss of great art. So self-awareness has been such a huge part of what I try to achieve on a daily basis. It's less about reputation management and strategy and vanity than it is about trying to desperately preserve self-awareness, since that seems to be the first thing to go out the door when people find success."

The advantage of this self-focused fixation is clear. Swift is allowed to make whatever record she wants, based on the reasonable argument that she understands her specific space in the culture more deeply than anyone around her. The making of 1989 is a prime example: She claims everyone at her label (the Nashvillebased Big Machine) tried to persuade her not to make a straightforward pop album. She recounts a litany of arguments with various label executives over every possible detail, from how much of her face would appear on the cover to how co-writer Max Martin would be credited in the liner notes.

As far as I can tell, Swift won every one of these debates.

"Even calling this record *1989* was a risk," she says. "I had so many intense conversations where my label really tried to step in. I could tell they'd all gotten together and decided, 'We gotta talk some sense into her. She's had an established, astronomically successful career in country music. To shake that up would be the biggest mistake she ever makes.' But to me, the safest thing I could

do was take the biggest risk. I know how to write a song. I'm not confident about a lot of other aspects of my life, but I know how to write a song. I'd read a review of [2012's] *Red* that said it wasn't sonically cohesive. So that was what I wanted on *1989*: an umbrella that would go over all of these songs, so that they all belonged on the same album. But then I'd go into the label office, and they were like, 'Can we talk about putting a fiddle and a steel-guitar solo on 'Shake It Off' to service country radio?' I was trying to make the most honest record I could possibly make, and they were kind of asking me to be a little disingenuous about it: 'Let's capitalize on both markets.' No, let's not. Let's choose a lane."

LIKE ALMOST ALL FAMOUS PEOPLE, Swift has two ways of speaking. The first is the way she talks when she's actively shaping the interview—optimistic, animated, and seemingly rehearsed (even when that's impossible). The second is the way she talks when she cares less about the way the words are presented and more about the message itself (chin slightly down, brow slightly furrowed, timbre slightly deeper). The first way is how she talks when she's on television; the second is unequivocal and less animatronic. But she oscillates between the two styles fluidly, because either (a) this dissonance is less intentional than it appears or (b) she can tell I'm considerably more interested in anything delivered in the second style.

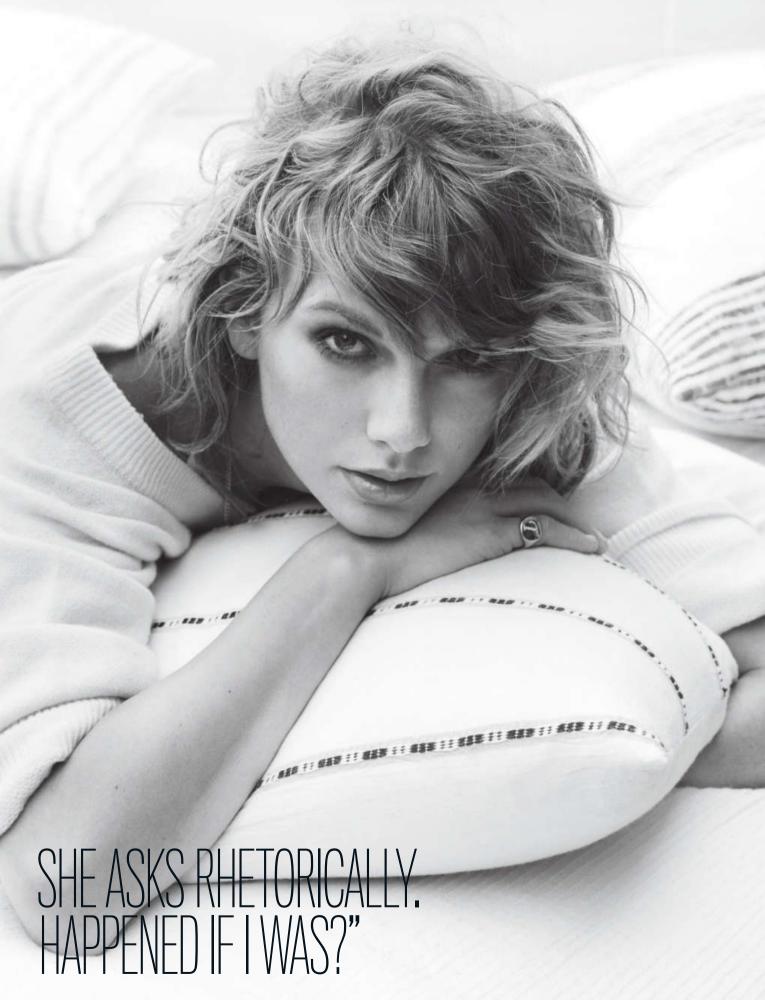
Late in our lunch, I mention something that happened several years ago: By chance, I'd found myself having dinner with a former acquaintance of Swift's who offhandedly described her as "calculating." This is the only moment during our interview when Swift appears remotely flustered. She really, really hates the word *calculating*. She despises how it has become tethered to her iconography and believes the person I met has been the singular voice regurgitating this categorization. As she explains these things, her speech does not oscillate from the second mode.

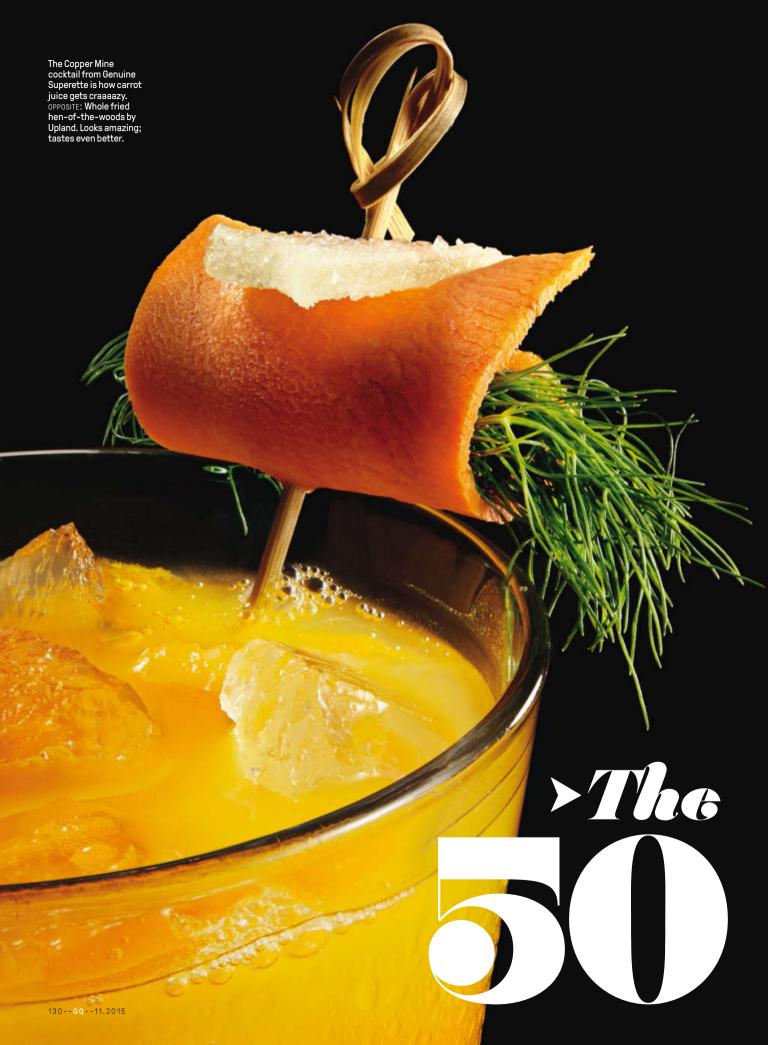
"Am I shooting from the hip?" she asks rhetorically. "Would any of this have happened if I was? In that sense, I do think about things before they happen. But here was someone taking a positive thing—the fact that I think about things and that I care about my work—and trying to make that into an insinuation about my personal life. Highly offensive. You can be accidentally successful for three or four years. Accidents happen. But careers take hard work."

Here we see Swift's circuitous dilemma: Any attempt to appear less calculating scans as even more calculated. Because Swift's professional career has unspooled with such precision, it's assumed that her social life is no less premeditated. This even applies to casual, non-romantic relationships. Over the *(text continued on page 174)*











BEST THINGS TO EAT, SCARF, SIP, SPREAD, SLAM, SAVOR, SCOOP, DIP, DOWNLOAD (YES, DOWNLOAD) & DRINK RIGHT NOW

One Big **Mushroom** Trip

I know you just got here, but go back one page, just for a moment, and look at that thing. The whole hen-of-the-woods mushroom by **Upland** in N.Y.C. presents like some magical fungus harvested from deep inside the magical-fungus forest: a big dramatic blossom of 'shroom, deep-fried and crispy and flecked with snipped chives. Texture-wise it starts out thin and crunchy. then gets softer and more mushroomy as you work your way down to the plate, where you'll find a thick and generous smear of herbed, ricottaesque Cloumage. Swipe wisely. You'll want some on every bite.-BRENDAN VAUGHAN

LOCAL, SUSTAINABLE, SEASONAL... COCKTAILS?

Our age-old love of booze and our newfound obsession with farm-freshness had a meet-cute at happy hour. In L.A., bartender-forager Matthew Biancaniello twists the gimlet with pepperv arugula. At N.Y.C.'s Genuine Superette, the Copper Mine (two pages back) pairs gin with a carrotparsnip-turmericand-more juice, while Alden & Harlow in Cambridge cuts its rum-based Volcano with tomatillo and serrano. And Miami Beach's Broken Shaker often farms up its caipirinhathink pineapple, lime, and kale. Nutritious? Nah. But you do get a healthy buzz.



TO





6 The Chef's Best Eats of 2015

For me, the flavor of the moment is funky and pungent, with a balance between acidity, salt, and spice—and the Cherry Wood Smoked Honey from Bee Local adds a deep, robust, smoky finish to things like poached beets and seared figs."

-RASSAMEE RUAYSUNTIA, LANGBAAN, PORTLAND, OR



7-10 Say Okay to Poke (It Rhymes, Trust Us)

THIS YEAR'S POKE-SPLOSION in L.A. happened without explanation, practically overnight, yet we're amazed it took this long. Hawaii is so close, and a *poke* bowl is the perfect lunch food: cool cubes of raw fish (a.k.a the *poke*) and fresh accoutrements over rice. Poke Etc. in Carson keeps it simple. Sweetfin Poké in Santa Monica goes the Cali-cuisine route, like a snapper bowl with

kale. Chef Eric Park converted his downtown banh mi shop into Ohana Poké Co., pushing build-your-own bowls with bigeye tuna. (Get brown heirloom sushi rice, chile-mango poke, and extra avocado.) Hell, even Gelson's, L.A.'s posh grocery, installed a mean poke bar, selling marinated raw fish by the pound. Non-Angelenos, now's the time to get in on the ground floor.—BESHA RODELL

PROP STYLIST: MICHELE FARO AT BRYDGES MACKINNEY. FOOD SYLIST: JAMIE KIMM. PORTRAIT ILLUSTRATIONS THROUGHOUT: TIM TOMKINSON.

The Gjenius of Gjusta

· Gjusta, kid sister of Abbot Kinney star Gielina, is like the best of those hangarsized food "-erias" people come back from Europe raving about, Only, since this is Venice Beach, L.A., it's on an anonymous block across from a Gold's Gvm. There's no table service: Pick from the menus (the porchetta sandwich is highly recommended

and over-delivers);
point at the daily sides
and salads behind
the glass counters;
ogle desserts, juices,
coffees, and justbaked breads. There's
wide latitude to a meal
here. In an increasingly
well-heeled hood,
that this place exists
marks a victory
for the bare feet and
board shorts that
settled Venice Beach.

-DANIEL RILEY



SLICED BREAD: Still Unbeaten

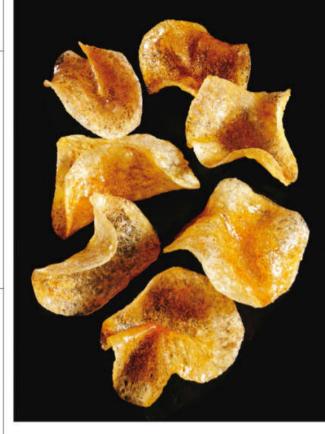
• BY THE TIME you set foot in **Semilla** in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, for the \$85 prix fixe—take it or leave it—you already know that the mercurial nine-to-12-course menu is inventively, intensely veggie-centric, if not outright vegetarian. Only, you have no clue that the best course (which is saying a lot) will be the bread. The slices arrive about halfway through, crisp on the outside, chewy-soft inside—carbo-paeans to ancient grains and the power of long-fermentation baking, somehow elevated even higher by spreads like butter in its own sour buttermilk. Could this bread basket get better? *Yes.* Refills are free.



13-18 Pucker Up While You Get Tore Up

• From what were once craft's snootiest heights come modern takes on two old-school sour brews. Gose (say "goes-uhh") is smooth and bright, its edge softened with coriander and a dash of salt. Try **Boulevard Hibiscus Gose** (pink, yes, but tart instead of flowery), **Off Color Troublesome** (creamy, salty, even a little savory), and **Westbrook Gose** (the briniest, cut with lemon).

Then we get to Berliner Weisse, a beer (usually wheat) laced with lactic acid, prickling and sharp. Urban Artifact Finn uses citrusy hops to amp up the tartness, while Dogfish Head Festina Pêche plays it against barely-there peach. And then you have Bear Republic Tartare, which—warning—is puckeringly sour. At least all these beers are low-alcohol, so whatever kick they administer to your tongue won't carry over to your head the next morning.—WILLIAM BOSTWICK



19
21
WE BET
YOU CAN'T
EAT JUST
ONE ORDER

• YOU THINK A PACKAGED snack is safely, idyllically lowbrow, but then chefs ruin it with their delicious creativity. Korean joint Oiji in N.Y.C., inspired by chips that started a craze in Seoul-as in, bags sold on eBay—douses paper-thin potato in honey, butter, and a dash of cayenne pepper (that's them above). At **Bottlefork** in Chicago, chips are shaken with malt-vinegar powder and a poached egg for a saucy-crackly mess. And Belcampo Santa **Monica** fries chips in beef tallow and serves 'em with Taleggio sauce. Great, now onion dip's ruined, too.-DEBBIE LEE



The Year's Best Burger*

*HAS NO MEAT

• Maybe the best thing about N.Y.C. chef Brooks Headley's raved-about Superiority Burger—better even than the nutty patty, the roasted umami-bomb tomato, the fact that no cows were harmed in the creation of this sandwich—is the texture. The bun squishes. The lettuce crunches. The pickles snap. That patty, made from ingredients Headley won't divulge and miles beyond whatever your vegan friends use to assault your grill during barbecues, has genuine heft. Who knew that in the perfectly proportioned Platonic ideal of a burger, beef isn't even necessary?—NICK MARINO



Salt That's a Century O

 Angelo Garro of San Francisco is, by trade, a blacksmith, but he's equally well known as a saltsmith. Omnivore Salt is a blend passed down by his late Sicilian nonna: a pure sea-salt base,

fennel, and hot peppers mixed in a secret ratio you can't figure out and he won't share. Doesn't matter, Rub it on anythinganimal parts, grilled vegetables, an open wound. It's suddenly better. You can't pinpoint exactly why, only that the flavor's heightened, like the volume's been turned up a notch. Best not to question Nonna's magic.-JON WILDE

25-27 | Asia's Come for Your Mustard

The next generation of pantry staples to squirt, spoon, and slather on your food all have their roots in Far Fastern cuisine.



Mother-in-Law's Kimchi Gochujang This fermented chile paste is the ketchup of Korea. Whisk with water until pourable, then let it add a spicy uppercut to anything savory.



Empire Sriracha Mayonnaise You could add hot sauce to Hellmann's, but this small-batch Brooklyn mayo (we know) uses an inhouse sriracha oil that beats the "rooster."



Apinya Thai Basil Aji Peruvian ají verdea bright, spicy green sauce often served with rotisserie chicken-is rebooted with Thai chiles and basil for a fireand-herbs boost.-D.L.

The Freshest Old-School Tasting Menu

• SEATTLE'S CANLIS—established in 1950 and now run by the founder's grandsonswas a place I felt I should already have eaten at, not one I was dying to try. But I'd forgotten: In March, it brought on then 28-year-old chef Brady Williams from Brooklyn's Blanca, the apotheosis of hipster haute cuisine. Where the food had been great, by all accounts, since Harry Truman held office, today the seven-course tasting menu at Canlis is thrilling—the briny sweetness of local vermouth-kissed spot prawns, the meaty funk of 28-day dry-aged lamb. The dining room is a midcentury masterpiece perched over Lake Union, but in the Canlis kitchen, it's right now.-STAN PARISH

WAIT, **BAGELS** FROM L.A.? REALLY?

Hard to believe a couple of food-truckrunning Angelenos could battle the New York bagel, but the Yeastie Boys rise above pretenders. Their sacrilegious West Coast fillings (alfalfa sprouts

and avocados are mandatory round here) are forgivable when the foundation is so solid. Besides. we're no puristswe'll take Cheddarcovered over poppy seeds any day.-D.L.



The Chef's **Best Eats** of 2015

We just started baking baby artichokes in terra-cotta cazuelas, which can sustain very high temperatures. The vegetables sort of melt in their own juices, with white wine, butter, and garlic. Right before we serve it, we top it with some breadcrumbs."-GREG VERNICK, VERNICK FOOD & DRINK, PHILADELPHIA

Mixers, Re-Mixed

home bar beat out the bar bar. Pickett's #1 Medium Spicy Ginger Beer concentrate lets you make a Moscow Mule with just the right kick. G&T's stop being boring with fruit and spice liqueurs from France's 130-yearold **Giffard.** And **Dram Honey Chamomile** Cocktail Bitters will gladly turn a whiskey into a proper nightcap.

• 2015: The year your













The Chef's **Best Eats** of 2015

Kinako, roasted-soybean powder, is used for sweets in Japan—it has this extraordinary nutty flavor. We use it to make ice cream for Kyoto Rye Crepes and Fig Jam-or, on the savory side, in a sauce with sesame oil, rice vinegar, and soy for serving with cucumbers or Fuyu persimmons." - STUART BRIOZA, THE PROGRESS AND STATE BIRD PROVISIONS, SAN FRANCISCO

41 Our Highest Praise for Weed Edibles

• BACK IN THE DARK ages of American drug policy, your buddy's dust-dry homemade pot brownies were a Russian roulette of potency. But the rising tide of legalization has blessed us with scientifically engineered, utterly delicious highs. The Venice Cookie Co.'s Cannabis Lemonade goes from sour to a sativa-laced headrush.

(Remember: It's two servings per bottle.) In Colorado. Incredibles' Affogato chocolate bar is a gateway drug to more affogato chocolate. While gummy candies from Soulful Medibles in Portland, Oregon, have good vibes and great flavors (try the pineapple), and can disappear into a bag of Sour Patch Kids before a flight.

40 **HELP MAKE AMERICA BISCUITY AGAIN**

 Stay with me, but Callie's Black Pepper Bacon Biscuits, shipped to you from Charleston by Callie's daughter, Carrie (24 for \$46), are the manifestation of the New American Dream-insofar as

you get soft, flaky black-pepper-bacon biscuits, chewy and salty and addictive, made steamy in your own oven, with nothing more than a click. God bless this nation. And FedEx.

-BENJY HANSEN-BUNDY



God's **Doritos**

• San Francisco's Nopalito serves "authentic Mexican food made with organic, sustainable ingredients." So what's the deal with Totopos con Chile, an appetizer that reads as soggy Doritos with crema, grated Cotija, and lime? Fresh corn chips are tossed in a fiery housemade salsa de arbol, which coats without killing crunch. Get an extra side of the cooling crema and-what the hell-a second order of this \$7 masterpiece. - s. P.





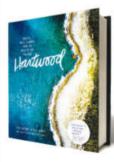
MY MOM'S **PICKLES**

> SHE DOESN'T sell them, you can't get them, and until she dropped off a Mason jar this spring, it'd been a solid decade since I'd eaten my mom's own breadand-butter pickles.

I'd forgotten about the slithery onions, the zing of the mustard seeds, how perfectly a plated pile of those electric green discs upgraded an after-school grilled cheese sandwich. Best thing I ate this year? A serving of sense memory.-J.W.

BRING HOME YOUR VACATION

 Maybe you went to Tulum and were blown away by Hartwood; maybe your friends went and won't stop talking about it. Either way, what use do you have for a cookbook from an electricityless locavore Yucatán restaurant? Everything. In the Whole Foods era. Hartwood's ingredients are close at hand, and dishes like braised short ribs with chile-spiked creamed corn work even if you don't have a wood-fired oven in an open-air jungle kitchen.-N.M.



47

Don't Forget to Tip Your Web Server

• Google wants to help you crack the door of that hyped new spot with its Popular Times graphs, which—get this—graph out the most popular times for any restaurant. Search a name on your phone, tap the "More About..." button, and discover why Tuesday is your new favorite date night.—J.W.



The Chef's Best Eats of 2015

is made of overripe fruit—we use navels, Meyer lemons, satsumas, and grapefruit—plus vinegar and sugar. We add it to beer for a shandy. It's all I want to drink."

-CHRIS SHEPHERD, UNDERBELLY, HOUSTON



19

An East Coast peanut butter and a West Coast jelly heal the wound left open by Biggie and Pac.

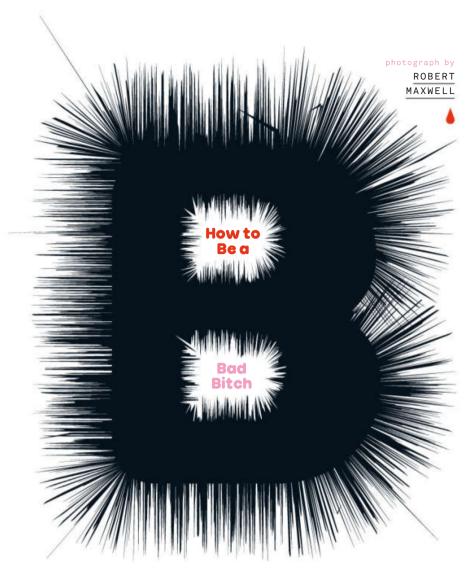
THE BICOASTAL PB&J

PEANUT BUTTER ON CRACK
• No one shuts up about Roberta's, the

Italianate osteria-slash-food-lab in Bushwick, Brooklyn. Yet few know this place sells its own peanut butter. The slightly crystalline texture turns luscious-smooth in your mouth as you catch a burst of chile heat and...coffee? Then you wish the jars weren't so small. At least it's an excuse to visit (though you can call and order, too).

JOIN THE JAM CULT

• Sqirl, the beloved breakfast spot in Silver Lake, L.A., was built on Jessica Koslow's preserves, made in copper pans with local ingredients. "The Persian Mulberry is basically caviar," says Koslow, since mulberries exist only one month a year. But don't sleep on Liberty raspberry with Tahitian vanilla bean—the sweetness to Roberta's peanut-butter lunacy.—B.H.B.



Amber Rose wrote the book on it. No, seriously: Kanye's infamous ex, Wiz Khalifa's baby mama, America's toughest bald babe since Sigourney Weaver in Alien 3, is about to publish a book of life lessons called How to Be a Bad Bitch. Like Amber herself. it's all heart. Unlike Amber, it's not that thick! The teen stripper turned megalomaniac muse spoke to Carrie Battan about her beautiful dark twisted journey to the top

Every week, Amber Rose teaches her 2-year-old son a new word. This week's word is technically not a word at all (TMZ will point this out after she's uploaded a video of her lesson to Instagram) but it comes in handy as we try to explain to him why there's a reporter here on a Sunday afternoon—a stranger lounging in the palatial master bedroom of Mommy's house in the Hollywood Hills. Both Nas and French Montana lived here before, Rose says, She still gets their mail.

"Hey Sebastian, what's the new word we learned this week?" Rose asks. "Con-versate," says Sebastian, whose father is the rapper and stoner king Wiz Khalifa. Khalifa and

the decorative stripper pole.) She lights a cigarette, Calling Amber Rose hot is like saying caviar is a good source of protein: It's technically true, but insufficient to capture her unique, otherworldly perfection. Rose is one of the few women in history who were meant to walk the earth with their heads shaved. Without makeup, she looks

even more surreal-like a character from a

Rose are in the middle of a messy divorce, but

Rose, 32, still has a tattoo of his shit-eating

grin on her left arm. Sebastian peers up at

us, looking a bit bored. "To engage in conver-

sation," he says, and we erupt in cheers. We

revisit last week's word-translucent-and

Rose holds up a bottle of water. "You can see

through it," Sebastian says. (Also translucent:

the tanning bed in the corner, across from

virtual-reality game who feeds on Swarovski crystals and male blood.

Rose pleads with Sebastian to come over to the couch and cuddle. After he obliges, she bows her exquisitely shaped head and he licks the top, like a lizard, "It tastes like pumpkin pie," he announces.

It's a sweet scene. But it also conjures, somewhat awkwardly, the very thing Rose has been trying to escape: her past with one particularly famous and influential man. (Hint: It's not Khalifa.) There is no way to watch Amber Rose's head being licked, even by her toddler son, without recalling the iconic Terry Richardson photo of Kanye West doing the same. Rose is so sick of talking about West-my ex, she calls him, never using his name-but right now she doesn't have to say a word for his ghost to appear.

Let's get this out of the way: Amber Rose is the most famous girlfriend in rap history. She went from the streets of South Philly to the stripper pole to music videos to Kanye's arm, where she stayed for two of the most turbulent years of his career—the period following his mother's death in 2007, and the ambivalent reception to 808s & Heartbreakall while becoming an object of fascination among gossip blogs. Rose was in the audience watching in proud exasperation as West stormed the stage during Taylor Swift's VMA acceptance speech, and she was along for the self-imposed exile that followed. She was with him as he masterminded his own redemption on My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy, an album that rendered the demise of their borderline-pornographic relationship in hi-def. (To this day, she won't listen to it: "Never, ever, ever. It's just not for me.")

Now Rose is on a mission to prove that there are more interesting things about Amber Rose than her entombed romance with the most interesting man in culture. She has inserted herself into today's pop-feminist moment, showing up on Amy Schumer's sketch show ("She's sick, she's dope," Rose says, "and she's a really good kisser") and at the VMAs in a getup hand-painted with the words golddigger and whore, speaking out against anyone who's ever engaged in slut shaming. It's become her crusade—her post-Kanye-and-Wiz raison d'être. And now she's publishing her manifesto: a self-help guide called How to Be a Bad Bitch, 256 pages of memoir and motivational stem-winding for Rose-minded aspirants.

"I have my own house. I have a Ferrari. I have a Jeep. I have an Escalade. I have two Can-Ams. I have a beautiful son, two assistants, lawyers," she says. We're out by her pool. She lights another cigarette. "It does become intimidating for a man. I do feel more comfortable with someone who's living up to par with me."

CARRIE BATTAN is a writer in New York City.

138 GQ.COM NOVEMBER 2015





10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CHALK-STRIPED SUITS

They're like pinstriped suits, but blurrier. So think of each suit here as a less rigid take on the classic bossy suit—ideal for our less rigid sartorial era.

suit \$2,214 Etro | shirt \$98 John Varvatos Star USA | tie \$19, tie bar \$15 (throughout), pocket square \$10 The Tie Bar | trench coat \$1,395 Burberry Brit | shoes \$580 Church's umbrella James Smith & Sons | briefcase Salvatore Ferragamo | location (throughout) Soho, London



They come in single- or double-breasted versions. (The double-breasted one will provoke twice as many double takes.)

They pop harder with timeless business-guy gear like a badass watch, a briefcase, and an umbrella.







grooming by maarit niemela at d+v management. prop styling by theo politowicz for the magnet agency. styled by kelly mccabe for art department. produced by purecreativemgt.com



where to buy it? go to gq.com/go/fashiondirectories

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT WATCH FOR YOU



SURE, YOUR PHONE TELLS TIME. BUT THE WATCH WORLD IS WIDER AND MORE STYLISH THAN EVER. IN THIS STATE-OF-THE-ART BUYER'S GUIDE, WE HELP YOU FIND A TIMEPIECE THAT SUITS YOUR TASTE AND YOUR BUDGET BY WALKING YOU THROUGH THE CATEGORIES THAT MATTER—AND SHOWING YOU ALL THE SWEETEST NEW WRIST MACHINES MONEY CAN BUY

MILL WELCH

● MITCHELL FEINBERG





SERIOUS WATCHES*

*FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE NEW TO SERIOUS WATCHES There are 145 badass watches in the photo on the previous page, so let the record show that 2015 isn't just the year motion-activated, GPS-enabled, tweeting smartwatches landed. It's also boom times for old-school watchmakers who still pride themselves on peerless design and precision timekeeping. If those hold value for you, check out the duo at left. Either will add polish to your look—and get you to meetings punctually. Call us crazy, but we still think that's more than enough.

FOR WATCHES ON PREVIOUS PAGE, GO TO GQ.COM

THE ROUGHNECK'S GUIDE TO ELEGANT DIALS

• Did you know there's a difference between a casual watch and a dressy one? The five stately pieces at right are designed to be worn with suits and tuxes, but these days the cool kids are choosing minimalist dials over hulking chronographs—and still wearing them with jeans.



Clive Owen actor and Jaeger-LeCoultre

A BRIEF INTERVIEW ABOUT WATCHES

YO, CLIVE! WHY DO YOU PREFER A SLEEK DRESS WATCH TO SOMETHING SPORTY?

"I DO SOMETIMES WEAR A
SPORTY WATCH, BUT GENERALLY
I PREFER SOMETHING COOL,
ELEGANT, AND UNDERSTATED.
I'M NOT A FAN OF BEING LOUD,
OBVIOUS, AND EXTROVERTED—
IN WATCHES OR IN ACTING."

BRACELETS THAT TICK

For centuries, men have claimed to love watches for their design and brilliant engineering. Fair enough. But the dirty secret of horology (that's the study of timepieces) is that many of us simply like to array ourselves with precious metals. Call it man jewelry if you must, but for high-design wrist

adornment, you can't beat Cartier, Bulgari, and Tiffany. (Just remember to pick up a little something for your lady while you're in the store.)



Cartier \$7,150

Bulgari \$23,900

Tiffany & Co. \$4,750



HOW BLOWING CASH ON A ROLEX CAN BE YOUR SMARTEST MONEY MOVE

• Seventeen years ago, I bought a Rolex as a birthday gift to myself. I'd been thinking about it for weeks. I wanted a stainless Air King with a smooth bezel, no day date, and sticks rather than numbers, which is not easy to find. One day I walked into the old Tourneau on 34th Street in Manhattan, and there it was on a pedestal. I thought, "Holy shit!

Now I really have to buy it!" So I went out on the sidewalk and just paced for a while. When I finally pulled the trigger, I paid \$2,650 for it—which was a lot of money. But a watch is a good investment, especially a Rolex. They're going for twice that much now.—JIM MOORE, GQ CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Rolex \$5,050



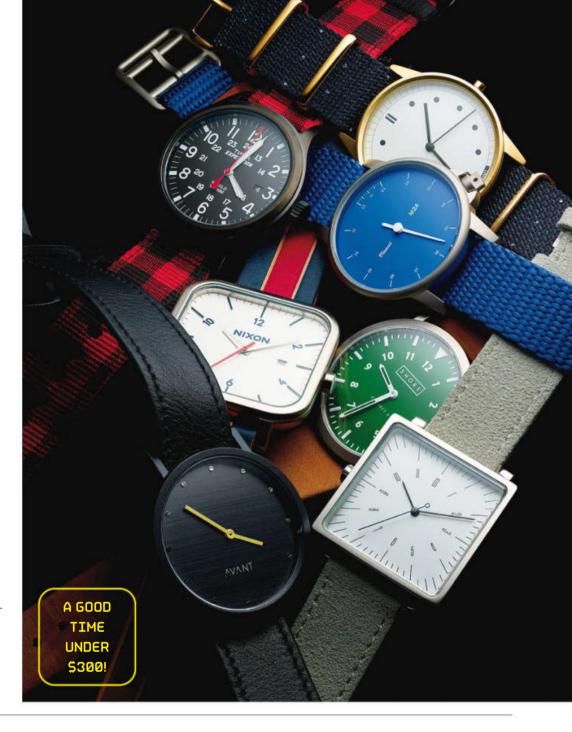
GREAT NEWS

FOR PENNY-PINCHERS AND COMMITMENT-PHOBES

• Buying a big-ticket watch is a commitment just shy of matrimony. You save up for it, you buy it, you wear it till the undertaker pries it off your cold, dead, farmer's-tanned wrist. But what if you don't want to marry your watch? What if you are indecisive, style-schizophrenic, cheap, or just plain broke?

Luckily, there's a new trend that caters to guys who prefer a whole drawerful of niftily designed and inexpensive watches. Guys who don't care if a watch is automatic or quartz, as long as it looks cool and won't cause financial ruin when left for good on a hotel-room sink. To be clear: We fully endorse this less precious approach to watches. It's fine to shop for wristwear the way you shop for plaid shirts: Buy them affordably and buy them often. Because as you can see here, there are now countless highly covetable (and Instagrammable) entries in the "damn, that's cheap" category.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT HyperGrand at Urban Outfitters \$129 Miansai \$185 | Shore Projects \$190 Great George \$250 | South Lane \$275 Nixon \$200 | Timex \$65



WATCHES YOU COVET, NAMES YOU TRUST

It's not just the tech companies who are muscling in on the terrain of the watch brands. In recent years, global fashion's biggest houses have worked with top Swiss movement manufacturers to develop these hunks of high style. So if a name like Seiko doesn't mean much to you but Dior rings all the right bells, you just found the watch for you.





MEET THE YOUNG AMERICANS

Used to be, a watch was either Swiss-made or it was junk. But a new generation of upstart brands repping the U.S.A. are changing that. At Weiss and Shinola, movements are still made in Switzerland, but the watches themselves are assembled in L.A. and Detroit, respectively. For master watchmaker

Cameron Weiss, the stated intent is to "restore prestige to American watchmaking." The best part? With a rugged strap and military dial, your hardscrabble timepiece looks perfect with your Cone Denim (North Carolina), your Shinola bike (Detroit), and your Filson jacket (Seattle).

Shinola \$625 | Weiss Watch Company $\$1,\!500$ | Filson \$600

CONTEMPORARY ART YOU CAN WEAR

 Back in the '40s. Movado released what would become the world's most famous minimal watch: the Museum dial marked only by a gold dot in the 12 position to represent the sun. Now the brand is introducing the Edge, a new Museum-inspired design from Yves Béhar, a.k.a. the guy who dreamed up Jawbone's Jambox and Prada's Luna Rossa cologne bottle.





Yves Béhar designer

A BRIEF INTERVIEW ABOUT WATCHES

YO, YVES! WHAT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION FOR THE ELECTRIC BLUE DIAL?

"THERE'S A BLUE-AND-BLACK SHIRT THAT I'VE HAD FOR A FEW YEARS. IT'S A COLOR COMBINATION THAT FEELS RESTRAINED AND BOLD AT THE SAME TIME. THE WATCH IS FOR SOMEONE WHO APPRECIATES THAT RICHLY DETAILED MINIMALISM."



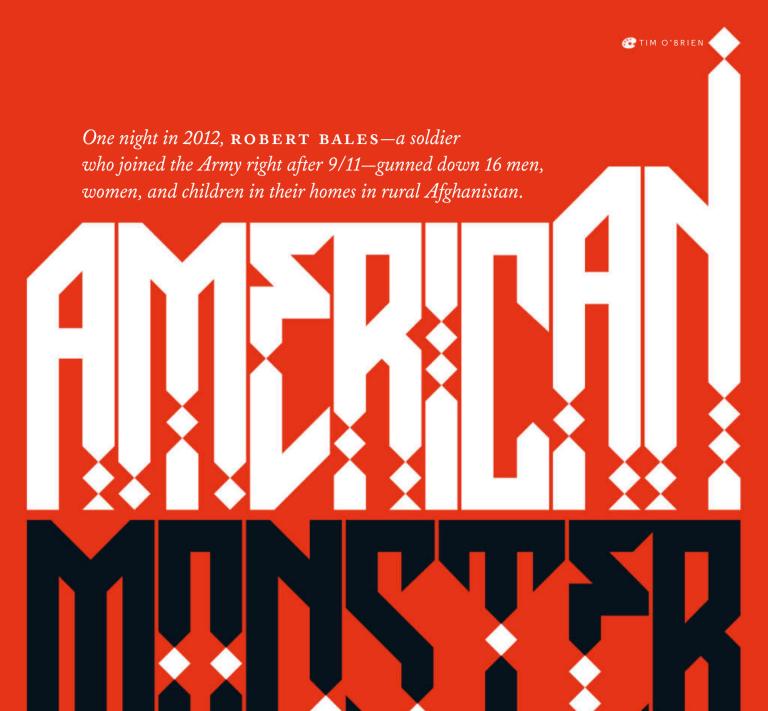
LOOK LIKE A \$30K MAN (EVEN IF YOU'VE ONLY GOT A FEW HUNDRED BUCKS)

Before we conclude this timepiece primer, we just want to say this last thing: Remember that whether you're diversifying a collection or strapping up for the first time, the power is in your hands. Not the salesman's hands. Or the hands of the rich-looking dude next to you at the counter. So if you wear \$250 sneakers but wouldn't spend half that on a timepiece, there's a watch for you. If you want to invest a couple of G's on a new best friend you

won't take off until the day you upgrade to a Patek Philippe, make it happen. And if you want to wear gold—the most eye-grabbing and ballerific watch metal of them allthen by God, man, get yourself some gold. You can buy into an Omega that looks laser-crafted by the watch deities themselves, or this aold-toned Kors number that achieves the same effect. Just scan your bank account, scour these pages, and seize the moment before it ticks away.

Omega \$33,500 | Michael Kors \$275

where to buy it? go to gq.com/go/fashiondirectories



It was the most notorious American wartime atrocity in decades, a tragedy about which he has never spoken. Now, for the first time, Bales explains how he could do something so unimaginable—and how that one long night was actually ten violent years in the making

~ BY BRENDAN VAUGHAN





I. KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN | MARCH 5, 2012

Through the scope of his sniper rifle, Staff Sergeant Robert Bales watched a man in a spotless white tunic stroll through a grape field. The man was a few hundred yards away, dipping in and out of view as he traversed the six-foot ditches separating each row of vines. He carried a shovel and appeared to be talking on a cell phone—or was that an Icom radio? Every so often the man stopped, dug a few scoops of dirt, and moved on. He reversed direction for a few steps, then switched back again. He never stopped talking on his device.

Bales thought, What the fuck is this?

A hypervigilant infantryman in his fourth combat tour in the past nine years, Sergeant Bales had been ordered to his sentry position on the roof of his base, VSP Belambai, because U.S. forces in the area were under attack. Minutes earlier an IED had ripped through an armored vehicle as it carried five soldiers back to the base. The explosion flipped the truck, concussing several of the men inside, none seriously wounded. But Taliban strikes like these often come in clusters—a blast to get things started, followed by additional bombs targeting responders—so everyone on the base had shifted to a defensive posture. A quick-reaction force was deployed to the blast site, now a scene of smoke, shrapnel, and debris, the husk of the smoldering vehicle lying on its side. Bales had been sent to the roof to track the guy in the white tunic.

Now, as he watched, the man moved in the direction of the wreckage. This struck Bales as strange. What farmer tending his vines moved *toward* that kind of chaos?

The man was 400 yards from the site now and closing. He was still holding the device. Three hundred fifty yards. Three hundred. *Fuck*. The call Bales felt he had to make would be much easier if he could see the device the man carried. The rules of engagement allowed U.S. soldiers to take out any suspected insurgent holding an Icom radio, the Taliban's detonator of choice for remotely activating IEDs. But the guy was too far away. Bales couldn't tell. He decided not to shoot.

Minutes later, the bomb tech clearing the blast site, a Navy petty officer named John Asbury, stepped over a wall near a tall dead tree and...*BOOM*.

This second blast did far more damage than the first, shearing Asbury's left leg cleanly at the knee.



wo days later, Bales and a couple of dozen soldiers were sent to the scene of the attack to examine the blown-up vehicle and harvest any salvageable parts. They were out in the open, exposed to the enemy, so they worked with urgency.

At the center of the blast site was that old dead tree, about 30 feet tall, visible for hundreds of yards. It was clear that whoever'd planted the second IED had used the tree as a marker, setting off the bomb when the Americans drew near it. Bales decided it was a security threat and must be removed.

First the soldiers tried a chain saw, but the blade was too dull. So they decided to "detcord" the tree—wrap it with explosive tubing and take it down by blowing it up. That worked, but then the trunk got wedged between two adobe walls, forcing even more time and effort to free it. All this took hours, during which time Bales and his men were taking light fire from the Taliban. No one got hit, but Bales was keyed up, frustrated, worried about a full-on attack. It was late afternoon by the time they managed to drag the tree back to the base, where it sat for days, a reminder of the enemy's suffocating presence—and, in Bales's mind, of his own inability to stop the insurgent that he believed triggered the IED.

The other soldiers wanted to simply haul the tree into a burn pit. To Bales, this would not do. He wanted to destroy the thing himself. Finally, on the morning of Saturday, March 10, 2012, after fixating on this symbol of failure for three days and mostly sleepless nights, Bales went at the tree with a hand axe. It took him eight hours—in full view of the entire base—but he eventually succeeded in chopping it to bits.

"This tree was used to hurt my friends, man," Bales told me recently, recalling the episode in an odd, detached tone. "It was used by the enemy. I had to see it go, you know?"

Later that evening, Bales would turn his rage to less symbolic targets. Shortly after midnight, under cover of a deep rural darkness, Bales slipped away from the base and walked to a nearby village, where he killed four Afghans, including a 3-year-old girl. Then, after returning to his base to reload and telling another soldier what he had done, Bales left again to murder 12 more in another village just down the road. Of the 16 people he killed, four were men, four were women, and eight were children. The youngest was 2.

A few hours later, the world awoke to what came to be known as the Kandahar massacre, the deadliest atrocity committed by an American soldier since the My Lai massacre in 1968, when Lieutenant William Calley's platoon slaughtered hundreds of Vietnamese civilians. As with that horrific chapter in our history, Bales's rampage occurred late in a long and ultimately fruitless campaign, raising uncomfortable questions about the wisdom of the war and its effect on the soldiers we ask to fight it.

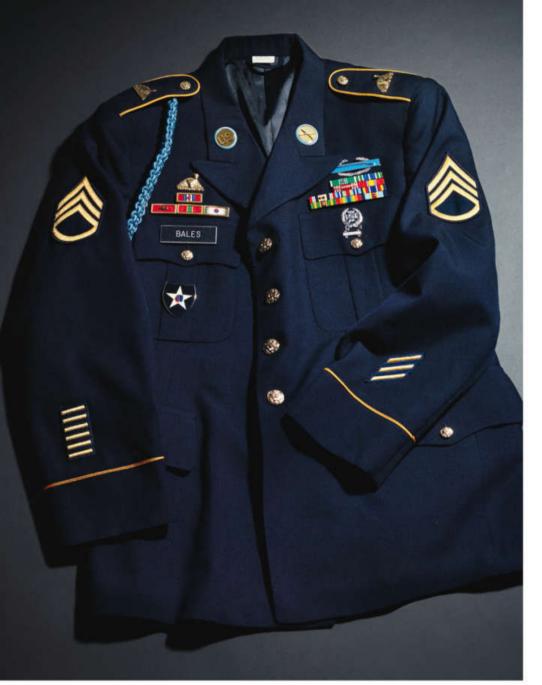
The story of the Kandahar massacre has been told in part by the Army's prosecutors; by the press; by Bales's comrades, commanders, and defense counsel; and by the Afghan survivors, some of whom tell a more complicated tale than the one that emerged at Bales's court-martial. But it has never been told in full, because it has never been told by the man who perpetrated it.

"It's difficult to talk about," Bales acknowledged in the first of many conversations we shared over a period of months, Bales speaking from the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, me from my office at One World Trade Center, high above the ghost pools where the twin towers used to be, the very spot where this American tragedy began. "But I want to tell you the story."

II. SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

OBERT BALES didn't join the Army until he was 28, a direct response to September 11. "It wasn't like he *wanted* to fight," says his brother-in-law Eric Tandberg. "It was just: That's what Americans do. You go, you get in line with everybody else, and you say, *We're here to make sure this doesn't happen again*. That's Bob."

The youngest of five boys, Bales grew up in Norwood, Ohio, a modest suburb of Cincinnati. He was an outgoing, friendly boy, a jock who also liked to dance, a leader on the football team who lost his starting spot his junior year when a talented freshman arrived. That kid was Marc Edwards, later a Notre Dame standout





AFTER ENLISTING AT 28, Bales took easily to Army life and was eager to join the war effort and build his military career. But the effects of four tours of duty—the pressures of the battlefield and the stresses back home—quickly began to mount.

ways, especially when fueled by alcohol. In July of 2002, at the end of a long night of partying at a Tacoma casino, he was arrested for assaulting a security guard.

Just over a year later, Bales met the green-eyed woman who would become his wife, Kari Primeau. "I was at a bar seeing a friend's band, and Bob happened to be there," Kari told me. They danced and flirted all night, but Bales warned her he was shipping out to Iraq in a month. "I'm like, 'Oh, my God, run!' "Kari recalled, laughing. "You want somebody who's gonna be around. But we had a spark."

The man Kari remembers from that time was pure enthusiasm, full of excitement, eager to tell her every little thing he was learning about war and how to wage it. But that all changed after Bales deployed to Iraq.

His relationship with Kari would eventually grow serious in spite of the distance, but he would never again speak to her—or anyone else—about combat with such naïveté.

and nine-year NFL journeyman who became one of Bales's closest friends. "There was just an instant respect there, on my part," Edwards says, recalling how Bales accepted his high school demotion for the greater good of the team.

In his early twenties, after a few years of college but no degree, Bales got his stockbroker license. He started out in Ohio, then moved to South Florida. He thrived for a few years, trading stocks in small community banks, but he lost it all—his clients' money, his family's, his own—when a West Virginia bank went under. One investor sued Bales and his firm and won an arbitration judgment of \$1.4 million but never managed to collect. (Bales had no money to pay, and eventually the investor and his lawyer gave up.)

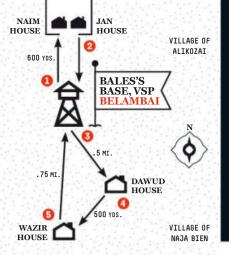
By the time of the September 11 attacks, Bales was demoralized and adrift. Enlisting felt like something he *should* do, yes, but the Army was also a paycheck and a lifeline. "He said, 'I gotta make something right,'" recalls Edwards. "Joining the military and fighting for our country was his way of vindicating himself, to a certain degree."

Bales got stationed near Tacoma, Washington, and became a gungho infantryman. He was eager for deployment, focused and intense, a natural soldier whose amiable aggression served him well as he adjusted to Army life but sometimes manifested in darker

III. KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN | MARCH 10, 2012

N THE EARLY SPRING of 2012, the dawn of the fighting season in Afghanistan, the Panjwai district of Kandahar, the spiritual seat of the Taliban, was one of the most hostile places on the planet. Insurgents were everywhere but almost impossible to distinguish from the destitute grape and poppy farmers who populated the villages dotting the relentlessly brown landscape. But making this distinction was precisely what the soldiers stationed at VSP Belambai—a dozen Green Berets supported by two infantry squads led by Bales—were supposed to do.

The base, a cluster of buildings surrounded by blast barriers and concertina wire, was located about 25 miles southwest of the city of Kandahar and extremely close to the villages it was set up to stabilize. The village of Alikozai was about 600 yards to the north; a little less than a mile or so to the south, the village of Naja Bien. Each settlement is little more than a collection of walled compounds that



FROM LEFT: After
the massacre, soldiers
tightened security
around Bales's base,
VSP Belambai, where
the victims' bodies
were brought. Across
Afghanistan, angry
crowds gathered, while
relatives of the dead—
like Mohamed Wazir,
holding a picture of two
of the 11 loved ones he
lost—demanded answers.



FOUR HOURS OF TERROR

000000000000

- 1. Bales leaves base for Alikozai around 12:30 A.M.
- 2. After killing four, returns to base around 2 A.M.
- **3.** Reloads, departs for village of Naja Bien.
- 4. Kills one before gunning down
 11 more in another house.
- **5.** Returns to base at 4:47 A.M.

contain a few dozen mud-and-brick homes with no electricity or plumbing.

Bales had aged plenty over the nine years since he first landed in Iraq. Now 38, his hair thinning and his 210-pound body thickening in the middle, he had spent three and a half years in combat—three tours in Iraq and now this one in Afghanistan. He had risen to the rank of staff sergeant, with 19 men under his supervision. Although he remained a loyal and committed soldier, he was also preoccupied with a growing belief that his men were insufficiently prepared, that his Special Forces superiors were too passive toward the enemy, and that he was not being granted the respect he'd earned.

On March 10, after spending all day hacking that tree apart, Bales was posted to guard duty from 8 to 9 P.M. with a young private named Michael Cerciello. Bales told Cerciello that he was anxious about a promotion he was up for. He deserved it, Bales said—he *knew* he deserved it—but he'd already been passed over once for the bump to sergeant first class and worried it could happen again.

Before long, Bales thought he saw lights coming from Naja Bien and Alikozai. "Everything is pitch-black," Bales recalls. "Think about a rural farming area of the United States—that's exactly what we're talking about here, and all of a sudden you see lights from the north and the south." Bales believed these were insurgents sending signals, possibly about a battle plan, possibly an imminent one. A few weeks earlier, a Navy Seal unit had spotted fighters taking refuge in Alikozai; other soldiers had seized weapons and matériel from homes in Naja Bien. Bales says he reported his suspicions to the guards on the next shift (the Army disputes this) but that no one took them seriously.

After his shift ended, Bales joined his friends and squad leaders, Staff Sergeant David Godwin and Sergeant Jason McLaughlin, in McLaughlin's room, where the three of them mixed Diet Coke with Jack Daniel's from a Dasani water bottle. (Alcohol was prohibited on base.) Bales says he had six or seven drinks over the next couple of hours while he and the others watched Man on Fire, the Denzel Washington revenge fantasy about an ex-military bodyguard who goes on a murderous rampage after the girl he has been hired to protect is kidnapped and presumed dead. As Bales drank, his mood darkened. According to the Army's investigation, he talked again about the promotion he feared he wouldn't get, about the anger he still felt over Asbury's leg getting blown off, and about the leadership of the Green Berets, whom he believed were not responding with enough force to the increasingly brazen attacks of the insurgents. And he complained bitterly about his marriage. He and Kari, who by now had two small children, were in serious financial trouble and fighting constantly. Bales's salary—about \$64,000—wasn't covering the bills, and they had stopped making payments on their house when they realized it was worth \$100,000 less than they owed the bank.

Just before midnight, Bales went back to his room and swallowed a handful of over-the-counter sleeping pills. He was desperate for rest. "You gotta understand, man, I probably hadn't slept since Wednesday. I just wanted to sleep that night." But he couldn't. "I just kept thinking about those guys that were out there, moving around at night, *doing something*. They're getting closer to the base, closing in on our position, trying to kill us."

He decided to take his concerns to Clayton Blackshear, the Green Beret sergeant in charge of liaising with the infantry. Blackshear's room was dark and he was half asleep when Bales walked in, his face visible in the light that came through the crack in the door. Bales had always respected the chain of command, but he felt comfortable with Blackshear, so he decided to just lay it all out: The Special Forces guys were sloppy on the battlefield, they were passive, they didn't take the fight to the enemy, which is why the insurgents had the confidence to pull off the attack that had taken Asbury's leg. The Taliban is out there *right fucking now*, sending signals through the darkness, saying fuck you, and we're just sitting back doing *nothing*.

One of Blackshear's jobs was to run point when the men were out patrolling on foot. Now Bales asked Blackshear to let *him* take that role, a job he'd done often in Iraq. *Who cares if I die?* Bales said, according to testimony Blackshear later provided to Army investigators. *My life isn't worth as much as yours. It doesn't matter if I step on an IED. I'm 38, I've lived a life, and if I get blown up, it's so much less tragic than some 21-year-old kid with all that promise ahead of him.*

Blackshear tried to listen, but he just wanted to go back to bed. He told Bales that everyone had a job to do, that the men who got concussed on Monday meant the Green Berets were short-staffed and unable to counterattack until their ranks were replenished. "He kinda blew me off and told me to mind my own business," Bales told me.

Bales returned to his room. Again he tried to sleep; again he failed. His blood coursed with booze, sleeping pills, and something else, too: steroids. About three weeks earlier, he had started using stanozolol, an anabolic steroid that he took because, as he told other soldiers, he wanted to "get jacked." His mind clanged with the ravages of war—the specific threat outside and the net effect of the past ten years—and anxiety over his stalled career and troubled marriage. As he lay in bed, he was unable to shake the thought that something very bad was about to happen. "I'm like, I gotta go see what it is, man. I can't not do anything, have it come out wrong. Have somebody else get killed or have somebody else get blown up. Knowing this is out there going on, and doing nothing. How can you do nothing? How many times have I done nothing?"

IV. MOSUL, IRAQ | NOVEMBER 2003

Y THE TIME Bales's combat career began, he already had a reputation as a preparation-obsessed soldier. But still, he was shocked by the visceral anarchy of war.

"The first time you engage, I hate to say it, but you kind of spray [bullets] everywhere because you're scared, you're hyped up, it's for real," Bales says, recalling the first significant battle of his first tour, a firefight in Mosul. "Later on, that goes away. You start to control your breathing, start to calm down. You know what you're







looking at and what's going on. You've been there. You've done it. But your first firefight is a pretty big deal."

The ensuing 12 months were "highly kinetic," to use the Army's stoic and understated language, with frequent enemy engagement. Bales sometimes drove the Stryker (the eight-wheeled armored vehicle that can carry up to 10 or 11 men) but mostly served as a gun-team leader on combat patrol, pounding on doors, raiding houses. The action followed him right up to the end of the tour: "We actually got shot at in Mosul on the airfield, as we were boarding the plane [to come home]."

Kari picked him up at the airport, and they went straight to a Seahawks game. Five months later, they were married. But even though Bales was home now, and safe, he barely scaled back his intensity. Powered by a half-dozen sugar-free Red Bulls a day, he worked life-consuming hours, rising at 4:30 A.M. to beat the traffic and sometimes not returning home until 9 or 10 at night. He knew he'd be deploying again and was focused on making sure his men were prepared.

He was also showing signs of paranoia, though Kari didn't fully perceive it yet. She had a habit of waking up from nightmares, fearful that someone was in the house. When this happened, Bales would get out of bed and perform a full patrol of the home—clearing every room, checking every closet—then go outside and lap the perimeter. Kari thought nothing of it, at least not then: "I just thought, 'Oh, that's just part of loving a soldier. He's taking care of his family."

Bales's boozing was another thing that, at first, didn't strike Kari as a reaction to his job. Though he got an open-container citation in 2005 and rolled his Mustang after a night out with the boys a few years later, his drinking often seemed fun and social, a hardworking soldier cutting loose. Other times it was a more brooding act.

"He would go out and sit on the deck and have a cigar, because that was something they did in Iraq," Kari says. "He'd listen to his music—Metallica when he was feeling dark—and you knew that he was dealing with all that he had seen. I'd go out there sometimes, but he liked to be alone. You could just tell that he was dealing with things that were...dark things. He didn't really open up a whole lot about those things."

V. KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN MARCH 11, 2012

ALES GOT OUT of bed and dressed. He put on a green T-shirt; camo pants, boots, and gloves; and a combat helmet equipped with night-vision goggles. He loaded up with his Heckler & Koch nine-millimeter pistol and his M4 rifle. He wore no body armor. He left the base through the one and only exit, on the south side. "We had Afghans [Afghan National Army soldiers] at the gate, but to be quite honest, they were asleep," Bales recalls. He turned north. He knew precisely where he was going: to Alikozai, where those Seals had seen insurgents enter the homes of two village elders, Sayed Jan and Mohamed Naim.

After about 20 minutes on foot, Bales reached Sayed Jan's home and slipped through the open gate into a courtyard, his path illuminated by the light affixed to the barrel of his rifle. Sayed Jan was not home that night, but others were, including his wife, two of his grandchildren,

and an adult cousin named Khudai Dad, a field laborer who had a wife and seven small children of his own. In all, 12 people slept inside.

Bales insists he was looking for military-age men, but the first person he encountered after entering the house was Sayed Jan's wife, Na'ikmarga, an old woman who had been sleeping near her two grand-children. Bales herded the woman and the kids, now awake, into an adjacent room, screaming at them to drop to the floor and stay put. When Na'ikmarga struggled with him, he threw her to the ground and stomped on her. "If someone's engaging with you while you're clearing a room and they're a non-threat, you're gonna push them down to the floor, which is what I did," Bales says.

He moved into the next room, which allowed the woman and the children to make a break for the adjacent compound, a two-family home owned by Mohamed Naim. Bales began to follow them, but on his way out of the house, he stuck his head into another room, where a man was sleeping. This was Khudai Dad, the farmhand. Bales shot him several times at close range, killing him instantly.

Bales followed the screams of the fleeing children across a narrow dirt road, toward the two-family compound. A dog leapt at him, and in an instant Bales killed the dog. "You have to understand, these people are starving, in poverty; the only reason they keep dogs is because they're Taliban," he says. "This isn't the United States of America. Fido isn't a family pet. Fido's there to warn that someone's coming."

Hearing the commotion, a man named Nazir Mohamed encountered Bales, who began to beat him, demanding information about insurgents and homemade explosives. "Where are the Talib? Where are the HMEs?" Others were waking now, and the man's wife, Mariam, implored Bales to stop pummeling her husband, while one of the couple's daughters, 3-year-old Gulalai, began to cry hysterically.

"At this point... This is tough, man, this is really tough," Bales tells me. Through the phone, his voice sounds ragged. He doesn't quite choke up, but long silences separate his sentences. "The kid comes running out, screaming, from almost the same [direction] where the dog came from. I shot the kid." He pauses. "Um." Pauses again. "It was a quick reaction. You know, to be honest, you know—I hate it. I hate it. Every day, I think about it all the time." Pause. "At this point, I just kind of turned and killed the man [Nazir Mohamed]. And pretty much after that it was autopilot."

Bales made his way to the side of the compound where Mohamed Naim and his family lived. Ahead of him, a terrorized group of women and children moved through the darkness, trying to stay ahead of Bales, pursued by the relentless beam of his rifle light. Finally the group reached the room of Naim, an elderly man whose bloodpressure medication had allowed him to sleep through the attack. The women and children woke him up now, screaming, "The American is shooting people!" Naim told his family to hide while he investigated.

But the instant he stepped out of the room and into the corridor, Bales shot him in the face and neck. Then Bales stepped across the threshold and looked into the room, where by now nearly 30 women and children were desperately trying to hide from him. He recognized the face of Na'ikmarga, the old woman who had struggled with him before running, and shot her in the head, killing her. Then, he says, he felt something "switch" inside him. He sprayed a fusillade of bullets, wounding four: Rafiullah, a teenage boy of 13 *(continued on page 171)*





CALABASAS

Jaden Smith has a game he likes to play whenever he's in public, or whenever he's stating something that will eventually become public—such as right now—and the game goes like this. It starts with him saying something Jaden-like. For example:

"Me and my sister started this initiative called Mystery School. It dates back to like ancient Egypt, ancient Greece—like Plato, Pythagoras, all these students had mystery schools. And what they learned in there was sacred. They would learn the math and sciences of that generation, and then they would build the cities and give that energy and that knowledge to the other people. And a lot of stuff they would keep really, really to themselves. Like, you couldn't say the word *dodecahedron*, which is just a shape, outside of one of the mystery schools or they would, like, kill you or whatever. Because it was such a sacred shape."

The next part of the game is: He waits. He watches you react. He's 17 and has already been famous so long that there are red-carpet photos of him he doesn't remember posing for. There are paparazzi photos of him and his sister, Willow, in strollers. There are photos of him right here at the Calabasas Commons, the strip mall near his house that he favors because of the Pain Quotidien and the Barnes & Noble and the movie theater and the juice spot. Every day, basically: a flip-book of Jaden Smith slowly aging, as told by strangers' cameras. With his long California-droughtcolored T-shirt and red-and-black leggings and his fine Smith-family features, he looks like a mischievous sorcerer's apprentice, which he sort of is. He's got the ease of a kid to whom the world has belonged for as long as he's known the world.

"Me and Willow are scientists," he explains, "so everything for us is a scientific test upon humanity. And luckily we're put in a position where we can affect large groups of human beings at one time." Fame is their lab, is what he's saying, and we are the subjects. He'll get on Twitter and tweet something like "The Biggest Flex Anyone Will Ever Have Is Dying." Or the *T Magazine* interview they did last year, the one that left everyone convinced they were drunk on prana energy: "That experiment—it went really, really well," he tells me. "We got to see how people reacted. And they actually ended up reacting exactly as we predicted beforehand that they would react."

He gives a sly smile. "It's fun, bro. That's what a lot of people don't realize. It's fun. It's so much fun. It's the best thing. People think you're crazy—I feel like it's an honor, actually, for people to think I'm crazy. Because they thought Galileo was crazy, too, you know what I'm saying? I don't think I'm as revolutionary as Galileo, but I don't think I'm not as revolutionary as Galileo."

It's the middle of a heat wave in Los Angeles, and we're sitting outside Le Pain Quotidien. He orders oatmeal. I guess this is another way of emphasizing that he's still only 17. The oatmeal arrives and he spoons it into his mouth and then he starts pointing at his mouth and frantically waving his arms. "Extremely hot," he says eventually.

It's 95 degrees outside and you're eating oatmeal. "Definitely. Definitely. Yeah. That wasn't the best idea."

He puts the spoon aside. "Let's walk," he says. We walk past a Sephora and a Starbucks and a cellphone store, past the usual dazed couples and harried moms that come to strip malls at noon on a weekday. "One day this will be the Calabasas Walk of Fame," Jaden says. "Everybody that lives around here, which is pretty much everybody that's in the news, they all come here." The Kardashian-Jenners live around here. Kanye and Kim. Drake. You might count his parents, Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith, too, if you're talking about people in the news. We walk past the Barnes & Noble and the Citibank and the sushi joint and a bunch of potted trees. The bland anonymous psychic terrain of a teenage space wizard.

He's the most driven young rich kid you might ever meet. He's 17 and curious. He's not passive. He doesn't sleep in. All he wants to do is make things. He's in Baz Luhrmann's new Netflix show, *The Get Down*, about New York in the late '70s—he plays a Basquiat-like graffiti writer—so he's learning about the era. DJ'ing, breakdancing, disco, voguing, graffiti. He's got a radio show on Beats 1. He's studying Photoshop, to be a better clothing designer. He just put LED lights in his bedroom so that it looks like space. He's working on his third album. He's making things, constantly. "Like, the clothes I'm wearing right now, done it on my own. I built my own bed, I built my own closet, um, I built two closets, I built four beds, I built, um, one pyramid—"

Wait, did you just say you built a pyramid? "One pyramid, yeah."

Where is the pyramid?

"It's at my parents' house. Half of a pyramid. The tip is missing, but the whole structural thing is built, and it sits at 12.5 feet tall. I'll Instagram a picture of it once this comes out, so people know what I'm talking about."

Why 12.5?

"Because it's supposed to be 14 feet tall or 16 feet tall, but the tip of the Giza pyramid is actually cut off. There's no tip. It's missing. So I was like, 'I want to have a missing tip on here, too.' Because I copied the exact 57.1 degrees that the Giza pyramid is. Obviously I don't have two miniature pyramids next to it. But I have a little pyramid in my actual room, too. One that's just like three feet tall."

How did your parents react to you building a pyramid in their backyard? Were they just like, "Go for it"?

"Yeah. Yeah. They always told us to, like, be and do whatever we want."

Mystery School is real, as it happens. It's how he and Willow refer to their home school. That's where he learned how to build a pyramid. They help set their own curriculum. "And that's what I really encourage kids to do, is learn the things that you want to learn, because then not only will school become fun, but it will make your dreams come true." Their hope is to inspire other kids to make their dreams come true, too. We can acknowledge here the unacknowledged privilege of that desire without condemning the desire itself. Things are possible for Jaden Smith in a way they're not possible for 99.999 percent of the population, yes. But he's out

cardigan \$995 Polo Ralph Lauren
t-shirt \$50 Mollusk
pants \$278 Diesel
boots \$400 Del Toro
hat Stetson at
JJ Hat Center
→→
hoodie \$550 Skingraft
henley \$33 ASOS
jeans \$1,750 Balmain
sneakers \$120 Nike
necklace George Frost
hat Albertus
Swanepoel
iacket (custom
jacket (custom
jacket (custom patches)\$395 NSF hoodie\$2,140 The Elder Statesman
jacket (custom patches)\$395 NSF hoodie\$2,140 The Elder Statesman
jacket (custom patches). \$395 NSF NSF hoodie. \$2,140 The Elder Statesman tank top. \$60 John Elliott + Co pants. \$118 Wallace & Barnes by J.Crew
jacket (custom patches)\$395 NSF hoodie\$2,140 The Elder Statesman tank top\$60 John Elliott + Co pants\$118 Wallace & Barnes by J.Crew
jacket (custom patches) \$395 NSF hoodie \$2,140 The Elder Statesman tank top. \$60 John Elliott + Copants \$118 Wallace & Barnes by J.Crew sneakers \$60 Vans socks Stance
jacket (custom patches) \$395 NSF hoodie \$2,140 The Elder Statesman tank to \$50 John Elliott + Copants \$118 Wallace & Barnes by J. Crew sneakers \$60 Vans
jacket (custom patches) \$395 NSF hoodie \$2,140 The Elder Statesman tank to your season tank to your season to your season to your season socks Stance bandanna (around knee) Urban Outfitters necklace
jacket (custom patches). \$395 NSF hoodie. \$2,140 The Elder Statesman tank top. \$60 John Elliott + Copants. \$118 Wallace & Barnes by J. Crew sneakers. \$60 Vans socks Stance bandanna (around knee) Urban Outfitters necklace Love Adorned

Stetson Cloth Hats & Caps











here doing bizarre and fascinating things with the opportunity. "I rarely go to parties. My whole life is just dedicated on learning and breaking, like, the craziest records of life, and being like one of the craziest human beings to ever exist. That's me."

That's him! He's young and a little crazy and obsessed with learning. "No summer break, no weekends. We learn every single day."

Do you ever think about college?

"I'll go to college. I want to set up offices at MIT just so I can learn and bring in new technologies into the world. Definitely sit in on lectures in college. I've done that already. Like, go sit in that, you know, USC, UCLA, MIT, you know, anything I can get my hands on."

His goal in life is simple: "I just want to teach people how to be comfortable. Stop being so scared." Wear a dress maybe, like he has. Study something no one told you to study. Tweet the first thing that comes into your head.

"I'll go to open schools, eventually, when I'm like 25 or something. Multiple schools. At the same time, around the world. So, like, two in the United States, two in Europe, two in China, India, Russia, Africa, all at the same time."

 $\label{like your Mystery School, but for more people?} \\ {\rm ``Mmm-hmm.''}$

It'll be like, 'This just happened that helped a bunch of people over here. We don't know who did it, but these symbols and things were left around, so we can only guess that it's Jaden and the squad.' You know what I'm saying? So I'm just dedicating my whole life to helping the world."

That's what he's like: big heart, big talker, big ideas. Remember: It's all one big experiment anyway. So this is how he says good-bye:

"Let me think. What do I want to say right now? Love yourself. And watch."

Watch Jaden?

"No. Don't watch Jaden."

Love yourself and watch what, then?

"I'm gonna say it one more time. Love yourself. And watch."

All right.

"Don't watch Jaden."

 Γ m gonna be in the car, being like, "What the fuck did that mean?"

"Yeah. Yeah. I want you to. I want you to be." And then he walks away.

ZACH BARON is GQ'S staff writer.

Ask him what he wants to

be when he grows up and he'll look at you almost with pity. As if age just takes the imagination out of you with a two-by-four. "There's no end of the process," he explains. "Life is a process. At the end of the process, hopefully I'll be dead, you know. Hopefully I just won't be alive anymore. But I won't. Because that's when the process will end. It's an ongoing journey that you'll never reach the end of. I'll never read every single book, or go to every single place. But I'll die in the trying of it."

Do you think about where you'll be ten years from now?

"Gone."

Gone?!

"Yeah. Gone."

What does that mean, "Gone"?

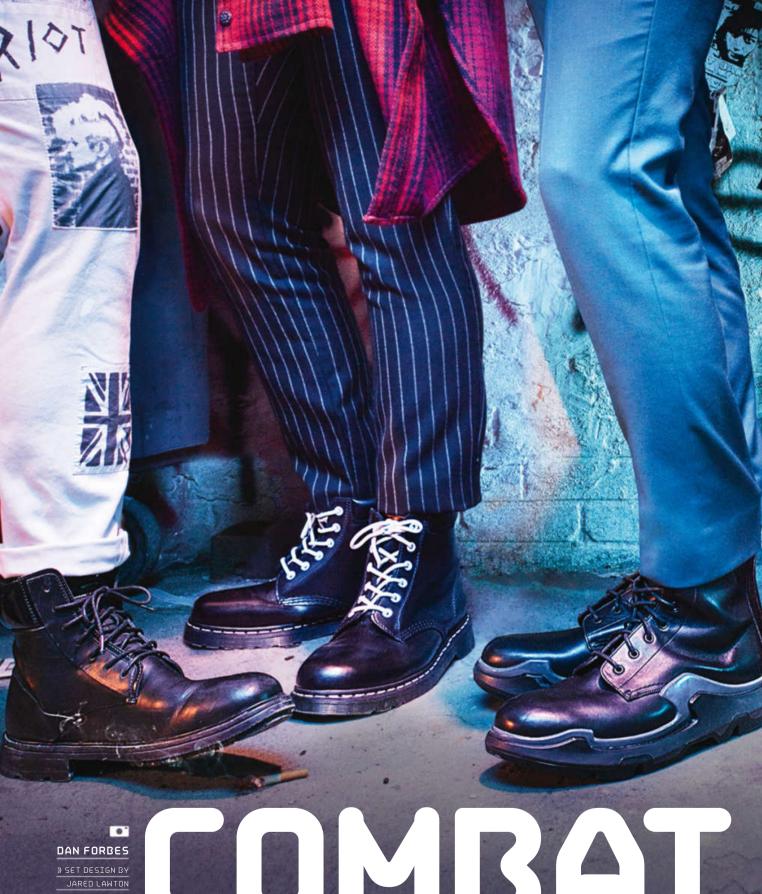
"No one will know where I am in ten years. They'll see me pop up, but they'll be like, 'Where'd you come from?' No one will know. No one will know where I'm at. No one will know who I'm with. No one will know what I'm doing. I've been planning that since I was like 13."

It'll go like this, he says:
"It'll be kind of like Banksy. But
in a different way. More of a
social impact. Helping people.
But through art installations.



ABOUT THESE CLOTHES IF IT FEELS GOOD, DO TT!

When you're someone who tweets things like "If A Cup Cake Falls From A Tree How Far Away Will It Be From Down. #Jupiter," you're probably somewhat of a hippie. But surreal language and logic aren't the only things that make Jaden the ultimate modern-day flower child. The kid also has an effortless way of mixing psychedelic clothes from highfashion houses like Louis Vuitton, streetfashion brands like Supreme, and bargain hubs like Topshop. (Jaden delves into the ladies' section, but as the kid himself would say, that's advanced swerving.) The key to copping some of Jaden's spiritual swagger—or the similar styles being donned right now by everyone from Young Thug to John Mayer to Pharrell—is simply to pile on clothes that move your soul. Sure, you want to mix as many patterns and textures as possible, from drug ruas to destroyed denim, but it's more important to be as free and responsive to your day, your mood, and the position of the planets as Jaden. We're not saying wear clothes like these. We're saying wear clothes like this, va know? #Jupiter. -MARK ANTHONY

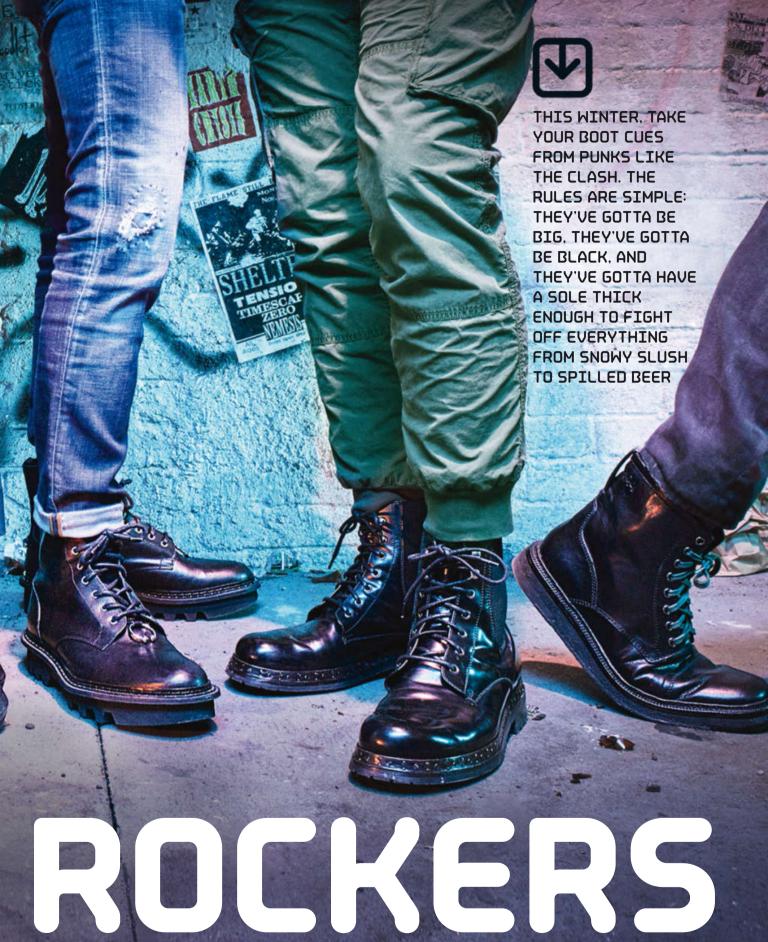


164 GQ 11/15

↑ boots \$120 **Calvin Klein Jeans** pants **Diesel**

↑ boots \$125 Dr. Martens pants Givenchy by Riccardo Tisci | shirt Off-White c/o Virgil Abloh

↑ boots \$1,050 Prada pants Prada



↑ boots \$625 **Neil Barrett** jeans **Dsquared2**

↑ boots \$1,295 **Dolce & Gabbana** pants **Polo Ralph Lauren** ↑ boots \$395 Coach Men's jeans Simon Miller



Could the planet's next catastrophe be averted by R2-D2? That's the idea behind the **DARPA Robotics Challenge**, a robot Olympiad designed to create autonomous machines that can go where no man can or should go—nuclear disaster sites, minefields, Montauk over Labor Day weekend—and fix all the toxic messes we make. The stakes are \$3.5 million. Oh, and possibly the future of mankind





Λ ◊ Λ A Major American City, 30 Years in the Future

UNDER THE YELLOW SKY, full of sulfurous smoke and stinging particles, the robot runs with the easy, loping pace of a wolf. From its baseball cap to its sneakers, it is dressed to blend with the crowd, through which it deftly threads, dodging and weaving, rarely altering its speed. To casual observers—or panicked ones—there is little to distinguish the compact, athletic figure from the mass of people on the wreck-strewn highway except this: It runs toward the fires and explosions instead of away.

Soon it is clear of the mass of fleeing humanity and passes only stragglers to assess (for threat or medical need) and entangled vehicles (empty or occupied by the dead or dying). Though its arms possess the strength of the Jaws of Life, and its software—behind its chest plate, where a human heart would beat—contains the diagnostics of a combat surgeon, the robot is driven by a mission awareness that won't allow it to linger long with the wounded. Still, the sound of agony draws it like a magnet; it pauses to administer morphine to a teenager pinioned in an ancient Tesla. As the bot withdraws the hypodermic, a sudden blast blows off its ball cap, and a wall of superheated gas incinerates its clothing. Stripped now to titanium and graphite, it moves on at a calculated walk, its melting sneakers making a sucking sound as it traverses the blistered asphalt.

Other robots, differently configured, are also converging on the city center. They rendezvous, share data, conceive a plan to herd the fires away from priority zones. As they work, they send information—about temperature, levels of radioactivity, the presence of viruses—and they formulate further plans. Had they memories—memories of experience such as we possess—they might recall that they've met before. Their ancestral parts, their prototypes, anyway, have met before, competed, in California in their salad days. DARPA days. Primitive, feeble, barely able to screw in a lightbulb! How they might laugh at that era of templates and point clouds and battery limitations. But the bots are not troubled by such memories. Instead, they merely work, neither knowing nor caring that it might be some weeks, or months, or years, before they can signal the all clear. In the meantime, their work done, they idle in a kind of machine hibernation, conserving power, waiting without fear, without impatience....

Δ ◊ Δ

Southern California, June 2015

HERE, NOW, ON DAY ONE of the DARPA Robotics Challenge, the little humans in the crowd are the opposite of patient. Overstimulated, brainy children—future roboticists, perhaps—they half-pack the stands at the Los Angeles County fairgrounds, chanting "Go, robots, go!" as the first four competitors enter the open-air arena. In just a few short minutes, against a backdrop of rusty corrugated iron and dusty windows reminiscent of a 1950s sci-fi-movie set, the robots will navigate the course like giant praying mantises cast in community theater. Five Jumbotrons will offer fans close-ups and instant replays as the robots wrestle with various Mr. Fix-It tasks, clear debris, or walk on a jumble of concrete blocks. It's a little like the Roman Colosseum, but with bizarre humanoid machines instead of gladiators, masterpieces of engineering that are still battling their own limitations as much as one another.

Twenty-three robotics teams from seven nations are here in Pomona, California, competing for \$3.5 million in federally funded prize money dangled by DARPA. (Full name: the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.) Despite its buzz-cut reputation, the agency is putting on a pretty good show here at the DRC Finals. There's a festival atmosphere, with a tech expo outside the stadium, under dozens of white tents. And though the purpose of the event is grim enough—to test robotic technology for emergency disaster relief at the Three Mile Islands, Chernobyls, and Fukushimas of the future—the competition format is kind of hilarious.

For each heat of the two-day comp, up to four robots at a time walk or drive vehicles from the racetrack oval toward the grand-stand—a *Futurama* Shriners parade—arriving at four identical obstacle courses. You are invited to imagine that this is the scene of an industrial accident—a chemical spill, say, or toxic-gas leak—some terrible thing man has wrought that man ought not, something so bad we just can't be there, not in person. But our metal friends? If they're up to snuff, yes indeed. The final task is to climb a stairway, at the top of which is catastrophic doom's off button, figuratively speaking.

For the robotics world, this is the greatest show on earth, and everybody's here—all the best U.S. university robotics programs, industry reps, toy companies, even a would-be pirate with a robotic parrot named Polymer. You couldn't swing a robotic cat—there are a few of those, too—without hitting a genius. DARPA helped bring us the Internet, the stealth bomber, the drone, and the autonomous car, which is idling just around the corner. When the agency throws its money (nearly \$100 million so far) and organizational skill behind a project, that project tends to have legs, so to speak.

The DRC began with a series of earthshaking explosions. It was March 11, 2011, when a 9.0 earthquake heaved a 50-foot-tall tsunami over the levees and into the towers of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, one of the world's largest reactor facilities. Three of the six reactors, the ones active at the time, overheated into meltdown, brewing dangerous amounts of hydrogen gas under pressure. As tens of thousands of citizens fled the area, a group of brave plant workers stayed on-site, working to cool reactors with seawater despite lethal levels of radiation and explosions of hydrogen gas that thwarted their work.

"At Fukushima, having a robot with the ability to open valves to vent the reactor might have made all the difference." That's DARPA's story—quoted from the press packet—and they're sticking to it. It's a little hard to swallow, given the extreme challenge of negotiating catastrophic wreckage, as opposed to attaching a robotic arm to every valve or some other simple hack. No, I think the Fukushima valve is a fairy tale, a symbol standing for something nobody quite knows how to define yet, something stirring a frisson in the neural net, the hive mind. Hundreds of the world's best and brightest young men—roboticists are almost exclusively male—are on the task here at the DRC, taking the leap of faith that rescue robots can be made effective and will be needed for some future shitstorm.

Until then, what we've got is apocalypse planning disguised as good clean competition. Whenever a robot freezes out on the course, as if in fear or confusion, the little robotics fans begin their chant, a mix of frustration and glee: "Go, robot, go! Go, robot, go!..."

Δ ◊ Δ

IT'S FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 9:40 A.M., and Running Man—a humanoid robot that is one of the world's most complicated, and problematic, machines—is T-minus five minutes from making his debut on the DRC Finals stage. None of the Circus Maximus atmosphere of the stadium can be glimpsed from the remote operating center, a vast, echoing garage where each team has a partitioned space for its tools, spare parts, and computers—lots of computers crunching huge amounts of data to get the robots moving inside the course.

"Dad, can't I just go? Daaad!?"

The pitch-perfect whine comes from John Carff, ace robot operator and father of four small children. Carff is a young man himself; it wasn't so long ago he sprawled on the rug in his parents' living room, compulsively building Lego robots. Now he sits before a bank

of computer screens—a barely containable bundle of energy, knee bobbing nervously—in command of Running Man.

At this moment, Running Man itself is a quarter mile away, having been manually loaded into the front seat of a Polaris all-terrain vehicle (ATV). To deal with spatial constraints—how does a six-foottwo, 385-pound robot with a torso the width of an A/C window unit fit behind a steering wheel?—and for ease of egress (getting its aluminum ass out of the car without assistance), Running Man drives from the passenger side. But it drives quite well, and Carff is eager to goose the gas. "Pedal to the metal all the way," he says. "I mean metal to the pedal to the metal."

"Dad" is Jerry Pratt, team leader for the Pensacola, Florida-based Institute for Human & Machine Cognition (IHMC), and he is saying, "Let's take it slow." A world-renowned expert in mechanical bipedal locomotion, Pratt is used to the joking. At IHMC, a nonprofit affiliated with the Florida university system, he runs a fun, relaxed lab, like a super-brainy fraternity, where it's not unusual to see a young roboticist cruise by on a gravity board. Lately, though, they've been under a ton of pressure, which has meant even more humor: Laugh or go crazy.

Along with Pratt, the other lead researchers cluster behind Carff. Peter Neuhaus is a biomorphics and prosthetics guru who, when not tinkering on Running Man, designs movement-enhancement devices for both the disabled and the super-capable. Matt Johnson, an ex-Navy Seahawk pilot, is the top robot-user-interface expert. Johnson's a cheerful pessimist whose motto is "If you haven't planned to fail, you've failed to plan." He makes an excellent foil for the ebullient Carff.

The team has fired up the robot, begun the checklist.

"Start fish-eye."

"Right fish-eye on."

It's like listening in to an airline cockpit. In fact, Running Man, a beautiful bot, most closely resembles an aircraft, in materials and technology—an aircraft that can't fly. But for a machine, walking is harder than flying. A lot harder.

"Lidar on."

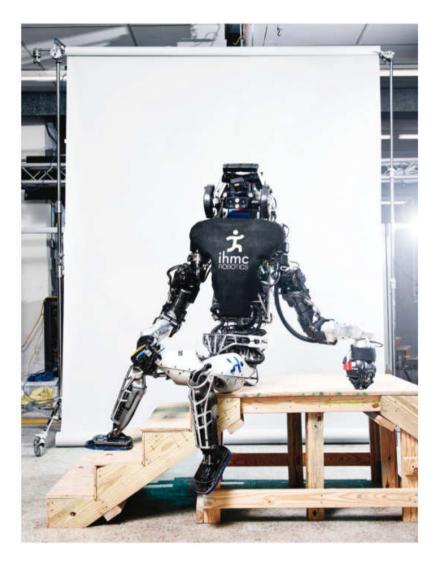
Now Running Man can "see" in 3-D, through binocular cameras and the Lidar sensor. The world inside the stadium appears in multiple windows on Carff's monitor, some views linear, like an Etch A Sketch, some brightly colored in hot pinks, oranges, pale blues, a Cartesian cartoon landscape. With its senses on, the robot is trying to figure out where it is. This is both basic and surprisingly complicated. After all, where are any of us? We're between things, that street

or another, south of San Francisco, north of San Diego. But imagine a robot's blank slate of a "mind." Instead of intuition and experience, a bot has a software-generated "point cloud," a theoretically infinite sphere of all possible locations, in the center of which stands Running Man himself, sucking in information, converting everything the Lidar sees into math.

"Take your time," Pratt cautions again. "All we need is 60." Sixty minutes: the time allotted to complete all eight tasks of the DRC course. There are two rounds—today and tomorrow—and since only the better of the two scores counts, the team's plan is to get through round one as carefully as possible, without smashing up the robot, then go for broke in round two.

The Polaris ATV, with Running Man at the wheel, begins to roll toward the stadium, steering a color-coded path of rightness between zones of wrong, a world of information zooming into the robot's eyes. At last, it's Running Man to the rescue. Carff calmly cruises the Polaris down the center of the lane, dodging between a pair of barricades, and pulls up perfectly in the parking spot. The phone rings; point confirmed. One down, seven to go.

Now for the egress, a pretzel of a problem. Here Carff has to employ multiple commands, exploiting many of the bot's "degrees of freedom," its joints. But Running Man is jointed like a shellfish, not bendy or



squishy like us. One day robots may assist the elderly, but right now they mostly struggle out of vehicles like Grandpa. Following a good deal of exertion, both feet are out of the car, descending, and the robot signals back to the operator that it is load-bearing. It's standing up, balanced, and on the move again.

Running Man is an excellent walker, but not a fast one, with the deliberate gait of a constipated gunslinger. But it's sufficiently graceful to pick up a second easy point en route to the mock disaster site, a dusty old factory. From here on, the communication is "degraded," like spotty cell-phone reception, to simulate catastrophic conditions.

For Running Man and IHMC, the manipulation tasks go swimmingly, if glacially. First up, opening a door. (continued on next page)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 169

Then, the infamous Fukushima-esque valve, which must be turned 360 degrees. For the execution of this task, Running Man employs a conceptual valve that can be visualized with the graphics program and placed to match the real valve. Somewhere in Running Man's 2 million lines of software, this ghostly representation of a valve has real existence. Of real valves it can know nothing at all. Plato would've loved this shit.

There's a scary moment at the "surprise task," a pull switch on a fuse box, when Running Man's balance warning beeper goes off. "Watch your elbow!" Pratt warns. But Carff catches Running Man in time, and they move on with six points in the bag.

The seventh task offers a choice between clearing debris-which the wheeled and tracked bots all choose, bulldozing throughor walking on rough terrain: concrete blocks set at various angles. Running Man opts for the latter and is halfway across the obstacle, on a flat perch, about to step down onto a tilted block, when the Lidar feed freezes. Oh shit! Running Man has fallen! He's on his back, gazing up at the cloudless SoCal sky.

"My fault," Pratt says. He chose the step that caused the accident. "I got too aggressive."

Fallen bots get a ten-minute reset, a mulligan. On the second try, they take the terrain one very careful step at a time and make it to the end-point!-but there's only five minutes left. "We gotta go!"

There's something wrong with the arms, which Running Man needs to position precisely as counterweights for the climbing task. As the right foot rises to take the first stairarrgh! The bot takes another hard tumble. Hopefully he's not too banged up.

Well, smiles and high fives all aroundseven out of eight ain't bad. Pratt and Carff and company aren't exactly elated, but they're far from discouraged. Their seven points turn out to be good enough for fourth place on the leader board. This earns them a lateafternoon start tomorrow, and still a good shot at the pot of gold.

FOR ALL THEIR PRATFALLS here at the DRC, there's an obvious logic to designing robots that will be like us, that will fit into human environments, use the tools we use. Bipeds, as we ourselves have demonstrated, can go everywhere and get into anything. These primate virtues would surely serve a robot of the future, whether as a space-traveling mechanic or a first responder in a disaster.

In the meanwhile, the three d's still motivate the field-robots for work that is dull, dirty, or dangerous. Tony Stentz, leader of Team Tartan Rescue (from Carnegie Mellon and the National Robotics Engineering Center), oversaw the building of CHIMP, a strong contender here at the DRC that can hunker down and travel on four tank-like treads (on the forearms and feet) or stand on those treaded feet for reach and manipulation. CHIMP is powerful (it can curl 350 pounds) and multi-configurable for all sorts of work. "There's a real need to liberate us from drudgery and danger," Stentz says, "Millions of people are still doing risky and mind-numbing jobs. This is a great opportunity to work towards human-and-robot cooperation."

Speaking of risky jobs, how about robot soldiers? The word on the street-well, at the Sheraton, anyway-is that what DARPA really wants are robotic warriors, once they become cheaper to deploy and repair than unemployed youths. At the IHMC lab in Pensacola, programmer Doug Stephen acknowledged that militarization of the tech is "a conversation that needs to happen," while other IHMC roboticists chose not to comment. At the postevent workshop, the subject came up at the lunch table as well-not for attribution, but with a nudge-nudge-wink-wink intonation, as if to say, "Well, duh!"

DARPA is a branch of the Department of Defense, after all, a behemoth that's all gas pedal and no brakes. A recent "open letter" to the United Nations-signed by a thousand leading scientists, including Elon Musk, Stephen Hawking, and Steve Wozniakappealed to the U.N. to ban autonomous weapons. The very real fear is that such conscienceless mechanical killers will launch a "third revolution" in warfare.

Alas, that genie left the bottle right after September 11. In his exhaustive and grimly entertaining book Wired for War, Peter W. Singer details the shift to autonomous war fighting as a fait accompli. The withdrawal of frail and fallible human flesh from harm's way is not only massively under way, it's been mandated by Congress, which has established that one-third of all new military ground vehicles must be robotic by the end of this year. Hundreds of billions of dollars in defense contracts have been awarded for robotic platforms, many of which have already been weaponized and have seen action in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In light of the sheer nastiness of warfare the epitome of work that's dirty and dangerous, if not always dull-it seems almost uncharitable for the signees of the open letter to insist that a human replace, or even accompany, these robots on their forays against evildoers. The quibble remains between "autonomous" and "semi-autonomous." DARPA's response to the open letter, the agency's insistence that a human will in fact always remain in the loop (at a safe distance, as we have seen in drone warfare), is ingenuous as well. Of course the machines will not choose on their own to go to war, say the optimists, nor independently design the missions. That scenario remains a distant nightmare-the stuff of Terminator movies and Wall Street derivatives, perhaps.

SO HOW ARE THE MACHINES doing here in Pomona? That's the question addressed by the DRC's organizer, Gill Pratt (no relation

WILL THESE ROBOTS REALLY SAVE US?

Three of the other top contenders at the DARPA Robotics Challenge



Name: RoboSimian Team: NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory Inspired by primate species that have evolved to scramble around on four limbs but can also rise to two, this bot was in third place entering day two.



Team: Tartan Rescue CHIMP remains stable by using its rubberized. treads to roll like a tank while standing upright or on all fours. (Note the clever forearm treads.)



Name: DRC-Hubo Team: KAIST

Catchy name, huh? The Koreans of KAIST have an easy rebuttal to that one: Scoreboard, This humanoid bot saved its best stuff for crunch time. to Jerry), at the evening press conference. Day one is history: the bots are back in the garage, having their wounds treated. Dr. Pratt says he's pleased with the course and the degree of difficulty: "Not too easy, not too hard." There were five teams with scores of 7, but only one perfect 8.

CHIMP holds the lead, followed by a fourwheeled bot built by a team from the University of Bonn. In third place is RoboSimian, from the NASA Jet Propulsion Lab. More insectoid than simian in appearance, with jointed legs sprouting from a suitcase-like body, RoboSimian also gets a mention from Gill Pratt for its elaborate and elegant egress from the vehicle: "A thing of beauty." Team MIT's humanoid, Helios, was edged out of the top five when it took the day's worst fall, badly damaging an arm.

CHIMP provided the day's biggest "wow" moment when it unexpectedly fell through the door and tipped on its side like a beetle. It struggled for several painful minutes until it managed to find leverage with one of its limbs and righted itself, to roars of approval from the crowd. "It's amazing how we anthropomorphize these things," Gill Pratt says. "I don't cheer for my laptop.'

There's already a "Top Ten Robot Fails" from the DRC trending on YouTube, and DARPA will show its own version on the Jumbotrons: the first human skill these humanoids have fully mastered is physical comedy. It's all a far cry, I'm told, from the trials 18 months ago, which one critic compared to watching grass grow. "Now it's like watching golf," Pratt boasts to the press.

That's certainly how it sounds on day two. With fans spread out in the bleachers, cheering robots on the courses, you hear a roar and wonder which bot just sunk its birdie putt. I've spent the day roving the stands, waiting for my Florida home bot, Running Man, and I've been well entertained. I've seen bipeds and quadrupeds and bots that resemble smart AV carts escaped from a high school. One such robot, the humble Cog-Burn of Team Grit, got bogged down early in the obstacle course. But consider this: It cost only \$20,000 to make, and all its parts are either off-theshelf electronics or 3-D-printed plastics. It's the Everyman bot.

Munching popcorn and sipping a soda, I've seen a bot face-plant right after egress, and another freeze at the door for long minutes like the Tin Man caught in an overhead sprinkler. Enter? Yes. Now? No, Dave, I don't fucking think so. The chant begins from the Small World contingent: "Go, robot, go! Go, robot, go!" And then it falls through the door as if shot by a sniper.

Team KAIST from South Korea, which finished day one back in fifth place, has just performed a brilliant egress, grasping the Polaris's roll bar with both hands and swinging out of the vehicle like a teenager. The lightweight bot is hot, tearing up the course. It scoots on its knees and can rotate its torso 180 degrees, which has definite advantages. KAIST is going to be tough to beat.

But now here comes Running Man, driving down the pike. Team IHMC was up till 4 A.M. after yesterday's two falls, finding a tiny bug in the software, recalibrating the Lidar. The guys are feeling fit and ready to compete, ready to give 110 percent, as I'm sure a robot will say one day when they're programmed for sports clichés. Running Man parks like a pro and laboriously extricates. Every time it scores a point, IHMC team members run up into the stands dressed in blue bodysuits. tossing bundled T-shirts, rallying the crowd. There's a rising tide of enthusiasm, a sense that Running Man is on a mission, about to do something special. It's careful and perfect through the manipulation tasks. It minces across the uneven blocks, where it fell the first day, and swaggers on to the foot of the stairs. Alas, KAIST has just posted a 44-minute, eight-point score and is not to be caught-first prize: \$2 million-but the silver is still up for grabs at the top of the stairs. With a perfect 8, Running Man can surpass CHIMP, currently in second.

Now there's a roar from the crowd with every step, "Go, robot, go! Go, robot, go!" Running Man bows slightly at the waist, holds its arms as if cradling an invisible medicine ball. One step, two. Two steps, three. Now the final step: step four for the silver, and a million bucks. Yes!

Running Man stands at the pinnacle, where it does something remarkable. It turns and faces the crowd and raises its arms in triumph. There's a lot of the human spirit in that gesture, a lot of Team IHMC, a lot of John Carff. I can imagine Jerry Pratt going, "What are you doing!?" And John Carff saying, "Dude, I'm celebrating!" And now what? Is Running Man going to dance? Indeed. For a step or two. Then the bot staggers; it seems to try to grasp the platform rail as it collapses to the steel floor, with exhaustion, with relief, for a well-earned rest.

Some of team IHMC has been down on the course, standing by to assist the robot, while many have watched from the stands or from the remote-ops garage. Now they're all reunited for the awards ceremony. Stoic Jerry Pratt is beaming; Matt Johnson, who planned to fail-and thus did not fail to plan-is grinning boyishly. "A million dollars is all right," he understates. "I'll take it!" Carff owns up to the bot's impromptu exuberance: "I was just trying to celebrate, a little something to get the crowd into it. But there wasn't much room up there, and I fell." In contrast with the pleased yet quiet and orderly Koreans of KAIST, the IHMC boys are downright rowdy. They've carried the team's battered old sofa from the remote-ops center to the stadium, and they've hoisted it onstage, where the team leaders lounge with the oversize million-dollar check, as if this were just another day at the office.

Running Man's celebration and collapse will appear in the DRC highlight reel. Indeed, Running Man's raised arms, its silent roar of defiance, become the concluding image of the event's film portrait, a key piece of robotics history. And what will these Rescue Bots save us from, what menace in the people-packed and problem-vexed future? We can't know exactly what, only this: It's a hardball universe that built us, and the future is coming at us at an accelerating pace, high and inside like a wild pitch. With these robots, we steel ourselves for the impact.

BUCKY MCMAHON'S last article for GQ, about a spate of shark attacks at a surfers' paradise, appeared in the April 2013 issue.

ROBERT BALES



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 157

or 14, who was shot in both thighs; Parmina, a slightly older teenage girl, shot in the chest and groin; Sadiquallah, a boy of about 10, who took a bullet through the ear and into his skull; and Zardana, a 7-year-old girl, who was shot in the back of the head.

"I was so angry at these guys [the men who owned the homes] for putting their families in harm's way like that," Bales says, his voice tightening with a kind of agitated despair. "You wouldn't make HMEs in your house. You wouldn't have terrorists running to your house, bleeding. You wouldn't have people run to your house for aid, where you have your wife and children sleeping. You just wouldn't do it. To me, that's hard. That's really, really hard to comprehend.... So I blamed them, but I took it out on [the women and children]. I was just raging.'

Bales turned, left the house, and started back to the base. It was about 1:40 A.M., less than 30 minutes after his rampage had begun. He had killed four and wounded six. He was low on ammunition, but he was far from finished.

VI. Mosul, Iraq | January 2007

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT WOUNDS that Bales would suffer at war were psychic ones. Like most soldiers, though, he had no way of knowing the damage at the time.

Indeed, the biggest and bloodiest conflict of Bales's career was most scarring because of what happened after it was won. In January of 2007, the Battle of Zarga pitted coalition troops against an army of 600 Shiite fanatics called Jund As-Samaa, or "Soldiers of Heaven." The two-day firefight killed at least 250 enemy fighters, and when it was over, the U.S. soldiers worked to save the lives of the surrendered, including women and children.

Later, in an interview with the Northwest Guardian, a newspaper published by the Army, Bales said: "I've never been more proud to be a part of this unit than that day, for the simple fact that we discriminated between the bad guys and the noncombatants, and then afterward we ended up helping the people that three or four hours before were trying to kill us." And then he added something that eerily foreshadowed what he told me about the men in Alikozai: "I think that's the real difference between being an American as opposed to being a bad guy, someone who puts his family in harm's way like that."

For all of Bales's pride, the episode haunted him. "There was this one thing he talked about a lot," Kari recalls. "He saw this woman, her baby was dead in her arms, and she had a blanket [over the body] because it was cold that morning. A man who was injured came by and. seeing that the baby was dead, took the blanket from her so he could be warm."

The 15-month tour wouldn't get any easier. Bales spent the last three months of it in Dora. a notoriously dangerous neighborhood of Baghdad. "I saw some things in Dora I just wish I never saw," Bales says now. He remembers one deep-buried IED that blew up a vehicle from Alpha Company, killing a couple of the soldiers inside. "It was pretty graphic, man. The IED ripped through the bottom of the truck. The insides [of the soldiers] were just plastered up against the sides, you know..." Bales displayed at least as much emotion during this moment as at any other time in the seven hours of conversation we shared-including when talking about the children he massacred. "It was bad, man. It was just as bad as it gets."

By the time that tour ended in September of 2007, Bales was 34 years old and thinking about leaving the Army. But then he scored a win he'd eventually regret: He got promoted to staff sergeant and, around the same time, handpicked to go to sniper school, a rare honor he couldn't turn down. "I was gonna get out, and I didn't," he says. "I really wish I had, but I didn't."

VII. Kandahar, Afghanistan March 11, 2012

SHORTLY BEFORE 2 A.M., Bales walked back through the gate of VSP Belambai, saying "Sanga yee?"—Pashto for "How are you?"—to the Afghan National Army guard, now a different one, who was awake. The guard trained his weapon on Bales and told him to stop—he was surprised to see an American outside the wire, by himself—but Bales ignored him and kept walking.

A few minutes later, Bales entered the room of Sergeant McLaughlin, one of the two soldiers he'd been drinking with earlier. "I told him, 'Yo, man, I just killed some military-aged males in Alikozai, and I'm gonna go to Naja Bien and finish it. Take care of my wife and kids." (The only male Bales killed in Alikozai who was even close to military age was Nazir Mohamed.)

McLaughlin didn't believe Bales, thinking he must be sleepwalking. Bales stuck the barrel of his M4 under his nose and said, "Smell my weapon." McLaughlin was sleepy, irritated, and unconvinced. He snapped at Bales to take care of his own kids. Bales kept insisting that he promise to look after his family, and finally McLaughlin relented, just so he could go back to sleep.

"I don't think I expected to come back," Bales says now. "Why else would I tell him to take care of my wife and kids? I grabbed a grenade launcher, a grenade belt, a couple extra magazines, and I rolled back out."

VIII. Tacoma, Washington | May 2010

IT WASN'T UNTIL after his third tour, a relatively quiet stint in a comparatively peaceful Iraq, that Bales finally admitted he needed help. The drinking, the paranoia, and the sleeping problems (three hours a night was not unusual) were all getting worse, and now there were some new problems: terrible headaches and an increasingly explosive temper. In the summer of 2010, he went to an Army doctor about the headaches. The doctor diagnosed Bales with mild traumatic brain injury (almost certainly from repeated exposure to IEDs, but possibly going all the way back to his high-school-football days) and also

found clear symptoms of PTSD. Bales, like many soldiers, had always believed PTSD was, as he told me, "an excuse to be a coward," a cop-out for weak men who lacked the stomach and heart for the real work of war. But he agreed to meet with a therapist, mainly because he wanted to ensure treatment for his headaches. That didn't last. "After a few sessions. I thought it wasn't helping, because he just kept telling me my anger was a mask for another emotion." Bales wrote in a letter to an Army judge this past February. "What emotion! The only thing I felt was weak, talking about my emotions. Where I am from, men don't talk like that. I told the PTSD doctor I was doing better, and he let me stop coming."

None of this stopped the Army from redeploying him to Afghanistan a year and a half later. Bales and his platoon arrived at VSP Belambai on December 14, 2011. The mission was difficult and tense, but he loved working with the Special Forces. To Bales, they were smart, prepared, aggressive, and perhaps most important to his ego, respectful of the regular infantrymen who supported them.

That all changed in mid-January, when the original detachment of Green Berets shipped out and was replaced by another one. Almost immediately, Bales took a dislike to this second group. In an e-mail to Kari, he wrote that "the old guys were part of the team the new guys think they are the shit," adding that they "treat us like bitches." In mid-February, Bales started taking those steroids, which may have shortened his fuse even further. Around this same time, he punched and kneed an Afghan truck driver who'd grazed him with a box while unloading a truck—an incident that fed a growing perception among the soldiers on base that Bales was becoming increasingly erratic.

As winter turned to early spring, the enemy grew more active. About a week after the Navy Seals chased insurgents into Alikozai. American soldiers discovered a 150-pound IED buried in Naja Bien and parts nearby that could be used for explosive devices. Five days after that, on February 29, they seized an Enfield rifle, a Thuraya satellite phone, two motorcycle batteries suspected of being used to power IEDs, and 30 pounds of hash. And finally, on March 1, four days before Asbury lost his leg, Bales and his men were ambushed by insurgents. When they asked their Special Forces commander for air support—a Hellfire missile-they were denied for fear of collateral damage, a decision that enraged Bales.

"We should have been dead, man—we got lucky," Bales says. "We had the opportunity to kill the enemy, and due to civilian considerations, the commander refused to drop [the Hellfire].... I couldn't understand why you could have an enemy pinned and you wouldn't engage them as a target. In my mind, by allowing the enemy to survive that, you allow them to become more brazen. We had signal intelligence where we had them laughing and cheering over their communications about engaging us and getting away. I mean, these are things that are psychologically defeating."

IX. Kandahar, Afghanistan March 11, 2012

BALES LEFT THE BASE again, walking right past the Afghan guard, who questioned him but did not stop him.

This time Bales headed south, to Naja Bien, where the rifle and satellite phone had been found. He first went to the house of a man named Mohamed Dawud. When Bales walked in, he found his entire family asleep in one room. He dragged Dawud out of bed, yelling "Talib! Talib!," and pulled him into the courtyard where Dawud pleaded, "No Talib! No Talib!" Bales then shot Dawud in the head while Masuma, his wife, watched from a few feet away.

Bales went back into the house. Masuma and her six children were in a state of hysterical shock, shrieking at the half-awake nightmare they must have been praying wasn't real. Bales then grabbed Masuma by the hair and, according to the Army's official account, shoved his nine-millimeter pistol into the mouth of her infant child while screaming, "Where are the Talib!" (Bales denies that he put the gun in the baby's mouth.) But he did not shoot.

Instead, he left Dawud's house and proceeded to the home of Mohamed Wazir, 500 yards to the west—near the spot where the Americans had discovered the 150-pound bomb. Wazir was not there, but II members of his family slept inside. His brother and sisterin-law were in one room. In another, his wife, his mother, six of his seven children, and his 13-year-old nephew. Bales walked through the door and into the courtyard, where he again encountered a dog. He shot it.

He then entered the room where the family had been sleeping on carpets, huddled together for warmth. Awakened by the gunfire, a boy named Issa swung a shovel at Bales, hitting him in the back. Bales easily overpowered the boy, flipping him over his head into the center of the room. A kerosene lantern on the floor provided some dim light. As Bales moved through the room, he kicked and stomped on various members of the family, beating one so severely that, according to prosecutors, he "left hair and skin stuck to the wall." Bales then set his M4 on burst and murdered all eight people in the room.

Bales stepped into an adjacent room, where he grabbed Wazir's brother and sister-in-law and pulled the couple into the room where their dead relatives lay. He forced them to the bloody floor and emptied the rest of his magazine into them. According to the Army, Bales then poured kerosene from the lantern on top of the bodies and set the room on fire. (Bales insists he did not do this and believes the lantern was knocked over in the melee)

At this point, Bales says, he was still looking for weapons caches and homemade explosives, none of which he found at any of the homes he visited that night. As he made his way through the house, he encountered one more soul: Shah Tarina, the elderly mother of Mohamed Wazir, Bales's rifle was out of ammo, so he shot the old woman in the chest and head with his pistol. "She was not dead," reads the Army's account, so Bales "crushed her skull with his boot, stomping on her with so much force that her face and head were mutilated, leaving her blood splattered on the walls of her son's home." Bales then picked up her body, carried her into the other room, and laid her down with her family. The blankets and sheets were ablaze, the room bright with fire.

"Now I think it hit me," Bales tells me, his voice slow, deliberate, and barely audible. "I think there's a point that, you know, when it

hits you, what you did. This is it. Everything you ever worked for, everything you ever loved. is now, in a matter of hours, destroyed. So I sat down in the room. Put the gun in my mouth." Long pause. "I just couldn't do it, man. It came down to thinking about my kids. I, uh, couldn't do it. Sat there. I don't know how long it was. I got up. I walked outside. All night I was in a T-shirt and just a pair of army pants, so now I'm just freezing. Before, I wasn't really cold at all, now I'm freezing. They used blankets to cover doors, so I cut a blanket off a door and used it to cover up. I remember being disoriented when I came out. But at this point. they're shooting up flares from the VSP. That was how I knew where I was. The flares."

X. Kandahar, Afghanistan March 11. 2012

THE FLARES WERE mortar rounds, fired by soldiers from the roof of the base to illuminate the sky. An hour earlier, after the Afghan guard saw Bales leave, the news had been relayed to the Americans. The search for SSG Bales was under way.

Meanwhile, in Alikozai, the villagers sought help for the wounded. One of Mohamed Naim's adult sons, Faizullah, borrowed a car and delivered the five bloodied survivors to FOB Zangabad, a larger U.S. military outpost located roughly a mile from Belambai. Their conditions varied widely. Mohamed Naim, the patriarch, had gunshot wounds to his neck and cheek and was crying out to Allah. Sadiquallah, the 10-year-old boy, had a bullet in the back of his skull. Rafiullah, the teenage boy, had bullets in both thighs. Worst off was Zardana, the 7-year-old girl, who had severe head wounds and was mostly unresponsive. As for the fifth victim, Mohamed Naim's teenage daughter, Parmina, the doctors were unable to determine the extent of her injuries, because she would not allow herself to be examined by a male doctor, and no female medics were on duty. A female soldier examined her above the waist and discovered a gunshot wound in her chest, which the medics treated with a chest seal. It would be hours, after the victims were evacuated to the larger American hospital at Kandahar Airfield, before a female medic would fully examine Parmina and discover additional gunshot wounds to the girl's lower body. All five of the wounded would survive.

Back at the base, the search for Bales continued. The commanding officer of the Green Berets, Captain Daniel Fields, ordered a rescue team to begin scouring the area around the base. He also dispatched a device called the Persistent Ground Surveillance System, a high-tech air balloon with a thermal camera attached to it. At about 4:30 A.M., the camera picked up Bales walking north toward the VSP, dropping to the ground as the flares brightened the sky, apparently in an attempt to avoid detection. At 4:47 A.M., Bales approached the gate, walking with what the Army's lead prosecutor would later describe as "the methodical, confident gait of a man who's accomplished his mission." His squad leaders, McLaughlin and Godwin, pointed their weapons at him. "Are you fucking kidding me?" Bales said, then accused McLaughlin of "ratting him out." Godwin and McLaughlin disarmed their platoon sergeant, whose pants and shirt were soaked with blood, ushered him through the gates of the base, and turned him over to the Green Berets.

For the next eight hours or so, according to the Army, Bales vacillated between confessing what he'd done and halfheartedly obstructing the investigation. When Captain Fields asked him, "Where the fuck were you?" Bales said he couldn't tell them because then they'd have to testify against him. When a medic asked if the blood on his clothes was his, Bales said no, but then shrugged when the medic asked whose blood it was.

A bit later, Bales asked the guards to bring him his laptop. When they obliged, Bales snapped the screen off and started stomping on it. Even more damning than his actions was what he said. As he waited for Army investigators to arrive, he offered a series of declarations that included: "I thought I was doing the right thing.... I'm sorry that I let you guys down.... My count is 20 [the number of Afghans he believed he'd killed].... You will thank me come June [the height of the fighting season].... We shouldn't worry about collateral consequences."

Outside the base, Afghans were flowing in from the surrounding villages. The bodies of the victims were brought there as well, covered in blankets and ferried in the backs of trucks and vans. As the dead were unloaded, the growing crowd erupted—horrified and enraged at the sight of the children's corpses and infuriated all the more by the desecration of the burned bodies.

XI. Tacoma, Washington | March 2012

BALES WAS WHISKED OUT of Afghanistan, angering Afghan president Hamid Karzai and virtually every other citizen of that country who wanted him tried, and perhaps hanged, for his crimes, in Kandahar.* Within days he had retained the media-savvy Seattle defense attorney John Henry Browne, a long-haired six-and-a-half-foot former Vietnam protester who once wore a cutout of Lieutenant Calley over his face at an anti-war demonstration in the late '60s. His point: We can blame Calley for what he did at My Lai—and we should—but not without assigning a share of the blame to our government and ourselves for allowing it to happen.

Browne began to lay the groundwork for a similar defense of Bales, hoping he could spare him the death penalty. "The government is going to want to blame this on an individual rather than blame it on the war," he said during a press conference. His instinct was to argue that Bales snapped under the pressure of four deployments and was not in his right mind when he committed his crimes.

"Part of PTSD is dissociation," says Charles Golden, a neuropsychologist who wrote a report on Bales for the defense. "The person feels like he's watching himself or outside himself—he's not himself. And head trauma—we don't have a lot of research on that—but head trauma may exacerbate that tendency to dissociate when under stress."

But as Browne confronted the military justice system that would decide Bales's fate, he decided the strategy would fail. "It was a political case," he told me flatly. "It wasn't a legal case." He concluded that the six military jurors would not be swayed by any argument that apportioned blame to the Army, nor would they put much stock in a mental-health defense.

Instead he proposed a deal: Take the death penalty off the table and Bales will plead guilty, sparing the government a trial at which sensitive or even damaging details about the Army might emerge. After months of legal wrangling—including a pre-trial hearing in November of 2012 that included graphic testimony offered by survivors via live video feed from Afghanistan—the two sides agreed on terms. In June of 2013, Bales pleaded guilty to a slew of charges, including 16 counts of murder and six of attempted murder.

All that remained for the jury was the question of whether Bales should ever be eligible for parole. Nine Afghan witnesses and family members (all men and boys) were flown from Afghanistan to testify during three days of hearings in August of 2013, and Bales apologized to them directly, saying he would bring their loved ones back "in a heartbeat" if he could. But what he remained unable to do, a full 18 months after that unspeakable night, was answer the biggest question of all: Why?

XII. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas | 2015

THESE DAYS. Bales does his best to stay busy at Leavenworth, where he was sentenced to live out the rest of his life. (The jury took less than 90 minutes to decide he deserved no chance of parole.) He's working on completing his college degree. He's training to work in the prison barbershop, where he'll earn a buck an hour cutting the hair of his fellow inmates, who include Chelsea Manning and the Fort Hood shooter, Nidal Malik Hasan, He talks to Kari nearly every day. She and the kids spent a week at a hotel near the prison in August, visiting Bales every morning, afternoon, and evening. "It's kind of rough to have a 5-year-old tied up in a visitation room for nine hours a day, but it was fun," Bales says, his voice tinged with awareness of how heartbreakingly absurd it is to use the word fun. "We built Jenga houses, played some Pictionary. Nothing like getting on the floor and rolling around with your kid."

Bales and I had our first conversation in April and the last in late September. Sometimes our calls lasted two hours; other times, 30 minutes or less. We both knew our phone access could get cut off at any time—technically Bales is not allowed to speak to the press. His friends and family often talk about how much he loved to joke, what a goofball he could be, and at one point Bales told me, "That's why I like being in a barbershop, you know? I tell jokes all day." But there weren't many laughs during our calls.

Why did he agree to speak to me in the first place? His "task and purpose," as he put it—Bales may have been dishonorably

^{*}I noted earlier that some of the Afghan survivors and family members tell a more complicated story than the one told by Bales and the Army. Specifically, they claim that Bales was not the only American soldier to participate in the massacre. None of these claims have ever been confirmed, and the accounts vary so widely that it's difficult to put much stock in them. Some claim that as many as 20 soldiers raided their village that night. Others say they heard—but did not see—at least one other American. Some who were not there that night—family members, Afghan authorities—have suggested that it simply wouldn't have been possible for one soldier to do that kind of damage by himself. Bales offers a denial that is both emphatic and chilling: "The truth is, we're the best-trained army in the world. I can't argue with my training."

discharged, but he still talks like a soldierwas to say the things he never got to say at his court-martial. One, offer an apology to the men he served alongside: "I want to say to those guys that I hurt-my guys, the patriot brotherhood-I want them to know I'm sorry. I don't want nothing but good things for my soldiers. I hope that in some way they can understand how sorry I am. They're my family, and I love them." Two, convey his belief that the homes and men he went after were Taliban targets, not random Afghan civilians. "It wasn't like I was looking to go into a school and open up on a bunch of kids," he says. "That doesn't make it right. I'm not trying to make it right. I can't make it right. The difference between a soldier and a thug is authority, and I didn't have authority. But it's not the same as walking into a movie theater and opening up on a bunch of people in a Batman movie." And three, explain that although he'd waived his mental-health defense, Bales believes he was very much not in his right mind when he committed the massacre-"Was I in some kind of trance? I'm still baffled by it"-or, more generally, in the years leading up to it. "How many people clear their house with a weapon in the middle of Nice Place, Washington?" he wonders, thinking back on those nights when Kari would stir.

Bales hopes this article will humanize him, and he hopes that one day in the hard-toimagine future, as the wars fade from memory, someone will deem his sentence to be excessive. take mercy on him, and grant him a measure of clemency. In February he filed an appeal with the Army, asking the judge for the possibility of parole after 40 years. The appeal was denied. But he's not giving up. He has just signed on to participate in the Combat Clemency Project, an effort by a legal team from the University of Chicago Law School that will appeal to President Obama to reconsider the sentences of six American soldiers who were convicted of murders committed while they were deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Bales's lack of judgment, his incorrect assessment of the situation he was in-it was fueled by his mental illness, his not sleeping, his drinking," says Mark Heyrman, the law professor in charge of the project. "He was pretty far gone when he left that base. Everything that could make you do something really, really bad was present. It was in some sense a perfect storm."

Meanwhile he's left to do what lifers just can't avoid: think. He thinks about what he did that night in Afghanistan, and what he failed to do, and what that says about the person he is, regardless of whatever circumstances he tries to convince himself matter. "You wake up in the morning and you're like, 'Wow, I am an incredibly terrible human being.' You don't want to think that about yourself. You look for a way out. You look for a way to say, 'It wasn't that bad. It wasn't that serious.' You don't want to make it true. But at the end of the day, you know what you did. You know what happened.

"I can't take it back," he continues. "If I could, I would. Not just because I'm gonna be in prison for the rest of my life. Because of the cost. No conscious person wants war. No conscious person wants to kill people."

This kind of indirect expression of regret, not quite an apology, was typical of how Bales talked about the Afghan people he murdered,

maimed, widowed, and orphaned. When Bales says he regrets what he did, I believe him, and for the reasons he cites. But I still don't quite believe that he thinks of his victims, fully, as human beings. The people to whom Bales apologizes, over and over again—with far more feeling than he exudes when talking about the people he killed—are the fellow soldiers he says he let down. And when he put that gun in his mouth after laying waste to an entire family in Naja Bien, he thought of his own kids, safe in their beds at home in America, but not the Afghan children he had just slaughtered like animals.

I don't know if the spirits of the dead are haunted by Bales, but his living victims certainly are. I managed to reach several survivors and family members through an intermediary, an Afghan journalist named Lela Ahmadzai, who had previously interviewed them for an Internet documentary about the massacre called Silent Night. Rafiullah, the teenage boy who was shot in both thighs, walks with a cane and is worried that his disability will prevent him from finding a wife. "I dream a lot of that night," Rafiullah says. "How he comes to our house and pushes the door in and enters our home. How he runs after us and screams. And everything in my dream is a mess." His sister Zardana, the girl who was shot in the back of the head, suffered substantial paralysis on the right side her body and has almost no use of her right arm and right leg.

And Mohamed Wazir—the man who lost 11 members of his own family that night, including his wife, his mother, and six of his seven children—has since moved to the city of Kandahar, where he opened a dress shop with the "condolence payments" the Army distributed to the families: \$50,000 for each death and about \$10,000 for each wounded. He quickly remarried and has a new baby boy, just 5 months old. (In Afghanistan a man is "nothing," Wazir says, unless he has a wife and children.) He returns to Naja Bien occasionally to look after the land he owns there, but avoids his house.

"When I enter the house, I feel exactly the same way as that moment when the attack happened and I came home and stood over the dead bodies of my family, absolutely powerless and helpless," he says. "That feeling hasn't changed at all: powerless and helpless."

In a twisted sense, I think, Bales felt the same way on that night back in 2012—and that this is the key to the *why* that remains such an elusive thing to grasp, even for Bales himself.

Many have called Bales "evil," an adjective that is so reductive it's meaningless. It may be that he carried the potential for evil inside him, but that doesn't explain why he snapped. Bales was a defeated man, a once proud man who was losing control of his finances, his career, his body, his mind. A man who felt marginalized and disdained by the elite soldiers whose respect he coveted. A man who, in the end, no longer felt like much of a man at all. And in those final fitful moments before he left the base for Alikozai, I don't believe he was motivated only by a desire to protect his men, as he claims, or a desire to murder random Afghan civilians, as the Army insists. I believe he wanted to prove his mettle as a soldier, one last time, even if it cost him his life.

BRENDAN VAUGHAN is GQ's executive editor.

TAYLOR SWIFT



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 126

past three years, Swift has built a volunteer army of high-profile friends, many of whom appear in her videos and serve as special guests at her concerts. In almost any other circumstance, this would be seen as a likable trait: Leonardo DiCaprio behaved similarly in the '90s, and everyone thought it was awesome. But it's somehow different when the hub of the wheel is Swift. People get skeptical. Her famous friends are marginalized as acquisitions, selected to occupy specific roles, almost like members of the Justice League ("the ectomorph model," "the inventive indie artist," "the informed third-wave feminist," etc.). Such perceptions perplex Swift, who is genuinely obsessed with these attachments. "I honestly think my lack of female friendships in high school and middle school is why my female friendships are so important now," she says. "Because I always wanted them. It was just hard for me to have friends.'

Popular people often claim they were once unpopular, so I ask Swift for a specific example. She tells a story about middle school, when she called several of her peers on the phone and asked if they wanted to go shopping. Every girl had a different excuse for why she couldn't go. Eventually, Swift's mother agreed to take her to the local mall. When they arrived, Swift saw all of the girls she had called on the phone, goofing around in Victoria's Secret. "I just remember my mom looking at me and saying, We're going to King of Prussia Mall. Which is the big, big mall in Pennsylvania, 45 minutes away. So we left and went to the better mall. My mom let me escape from certain things that were too painful to deal with. And we talked about it the whole ride there, and we had a good time shopping."

This incident appears to be the genesis for a verse in her 2008 song "The Best Day," a connection she doesn't note when she tells me the story. A cynical person could read something into this anecdote and turn it into a metaphor about capitalism or parenting or creativity or Pennsylvania. But in the framework of our conversation, it did not seem metaphoric of anything. It just seemed like a (very real) memory that might be more internally motivating than any simplistic desire for money or power.

So is it unfair to categorize Swift as *calculating?* Maybe, and particularly if you view that term as exclusively pejorative. But calling her *guileless* would be even crazier. Swift views her lyrics as the most important part of her art ("The lyrics are what I want you to focus on," she asserts), so we spend some time parsing specific passages from specific songs. Here is how she dissects the conjecture over "Bad Blood," a single universally assumed to be about Katv Perry.

You never say who your songs are about, but you concede that if enough people believe something, it essentially becomes fact. So by not saying who you're writing about, aren't you allowing public consensus to dictate the meaning of your work? If everyone assumes that "Bad Blood" is about a specific person, aren't you allowing the culture to create a fact about your life? You're in a Rolling Stone interview, and the writer says, "Who is that song about? That sounds like a really intense moment from your life." And you sit there, and you know you're on good terms with your ex-boyfriend, and you don't want him-or his family-to think you're firing shots at him. So you say, "That was about losing a friend." And that's basically all you say. But then people cryptically tweet about what you meant. I never said anything that would point a finger in the specific direction of one specific person, and I can sleep at night knowing that. I knew the song would be assigned to a person, and the easiest mark was someone who I didn't want to be labled with this song. It was not a song about heartbreak. It was about the loss of friendship.

But nobody thinks that song is about a guy. But they would have. So I don't necessarily care who people think it's about. I just needed to divert them away from the easiest target. Listen to the song. It doesn't point to any one person or any one situation. But if you'd listened to my previous four albums, you would think this was about a guy who broke my heart. And nothing could be further from the truth. It was important to show that losing friendships can be just as damaging to a person as losing a romantic relationship.

Now, there are more than a few molecules of bullshit in this response. When Swift says, "And that's basically all you say," she's neglecting to mention that she also told the reporter that the disharmony stemmed from a business conflict, and that the individual in question tried to sabotage an arena tour by hiring away some of her employees. These details dramatically reduce the pool of potential candidates. Yet consider the strategy's larger brilliance: In order to abort the possibility of a rumor she did not want, she propagated the existence of a different rumor that offered the added value of making the song more interesting.

Swift can manufacture the kind of mythology that used to happen to Carly Simon by accident.

SPEAKING OF ACCIDENTS, here's some breaking news: They happen to Taylor Swift, too. She believes the most consequential accident of her professional life was when Kanye West famously stormed the stage during her acceptance speech at the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards. I'm surprised when she brings this up unprompted, because she has barely addressed the incident in five years, aside from the (comically undisguised) song "Innocent." But fences have been mended and feelings have been felt. At this summer's VMAs, Swift warmly presented West with the Video Vanguard trophy. She'll probably serve as Secretary of the Interior when he becomes president.

Swift was lauded for handling West's '09 intrusion with grace and composure, but her personal memories of the event dwell on

Swift analyzes her friendships so often that I eventually ask what seems like an obvious question: Does she ever feel lonely? She responds by literally talking about *Friends*.

the bewilderment. When West first jumped onstage, Swift halfway assumed he was about to make a special presentation, honoring her for being the first country artist to ever win a VMA. She truly had no idea what was transpiring. "When the crowd started booing, I thought they were booing because they also believed I didn't deserve the award. That's where the hurt came from. I went backstage and cried, and then I had to stop crying and perform five minutes later. I just told myself I had to perform, and I tried to convince myself that maybe this wasn't that big of a deal. But that was the most happenstance thing to ever happen in my career. And to now be in a place where Kanye and I respect each other-that's one of my favorite things that has happened in my career."

Swift analyzes her friendships so often that I eventually ask what seems like an obvious question: Does she ever feel lonely? She responds by literally talking about Friends. "I'm around people so much," she says. "Massive amounts of people. I do a meetand-greet every night on the tour, and it's 150 people. Before that, it's a radio meet-and-greet with 40 people. After the show, it's 30 or 40 more people. So then when I go home and turn on the TV, and I've got Monica and Chandler and Ross and Rachel and Phoebe and Joey on a Friends marathon, I don't feel lonely. I've just been onstage for two hours, talking to 60,000 people about my feelings. That's so much social stimulation. When I get home, there is not one part of me that wishes I was around other people."

This is understandable. Still, I note something any musician obsessed with self-awareness would undoubtedly recognize: In the retrospective context of a hypothetical *Behind the Music* episode, this anecdote would be framed as depressing. It would paint the portrait of a super-famous entertainer spending her day emoting to thousands of strangers, only to return home to an empty house and the one-way company of two-dimensional characters.

Does she not see the irony?

Oh, she sees it. But that doesn't mean it's real.

"There is such a thing as having enough," she says in her non-TV voice. "You might think a meet-and-greet with 150 people sounds sad, because maybe you think I'm forced to do it. But you would be surprised. A meaningful conversation doesn't mean that conversation has to last an hour. A meet-andgreet might sound weird to someone who's never done one, but after ten years, you learn to appreciate happiness when it happens, and that happiness is rare and fleeting, and that you're not entitled to it. You know, during the first few years of your career, the only thing anyone says to you is 'Enjoy this. Just enjoy this.' That's all they ever tell you. And I finally know how to do that."

Taylor Swift is 25. But she's older than you. 3

CHUCK KLOSTERMAN (@CKlosterman) is the author of eight books, most recently I Wear the Black Hat: Grappling with Villains (Real and Imagined).

GQ IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF ADVANCE MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS INC. COPYRIGHT c 2015 condé nast, all rights reserved, printed in the u.s.a.

VOLUME 85, NO. 11. GQ (ISSN 0016-6979) is published monthly by Condé Nast, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: Condé Nast, One World Trade Center, New York, NY 10007. S. I. Newhouse, Jr., Chairman; Charles H. Townsend, Chief Executive Officer; Robert A. Sauerberg, Jr., President; David E. Geithner, Chief Financial Officer; Jill Bright, Chief Administrative Officer. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40644503. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. 123242885-RT0001. Canada Post: return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: P.O. Box 874, Station Main. Markham. ON L3P 8L4.

POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS (SEE DMM 507.1.5.2); NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: Send address corrections to GQ, P.O. Box 37675, Boone, IA 50037-0675. FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADDRESS CHANGES, ADJUSTMENTS, OR BACK ISSUE INQUIRIES: Please write to GQ, P.O. Box 37675, Boone, IA 50037-0675, call 800-289-9330, or e-mail subscriptions@gq.com. Please give both new and old addresses as printed on most recent label. First copy of new subscription will be mailed within four weeks after receipt of order. Address all editorial, business, and production correspondence to GQ Magazine, One World Trade Center, New York, NY 10007. For reprints, please e-mail reprints@condenast.com or call Wright's Media 877-652-5295. For reuse permissions, please e-mail contentilicensing@condenast.com or call 800-897-8666. Visit us online at www.gq.com. To subscribe to other Condé Nast magazines on the World Wide Web, visit www.condenastdigital.com. Occasionally, we make our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services that we believe would interest our readers. If you do not want to receive these offers and/or information, please advise us at P.O. Box 37675, Boone, IA 50037-0675 or call 800-289-9330.

GQ IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RETURN OR LOSS OF, OR FOR DAMAGE OR ANY OTHER INJURY TO, UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPTS, UNSOLICITED ART WORK (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND TRANSPARENCIES), OR ANY OTHER UNSOLICITED MATERIALS. THOSE SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ART WORK, OR OTHER MATERIALS FOR CONSIDERATION SHOULD NOT SEND ORIGINALS, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED TO DO SO BY GO IN WRITING. MANUSCRIPTS, PHOTOGRAPHS. AND OTHER MATERIALS SUBMITTED MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE.

